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# Pitfalls in English

and

## How to Avoid Them

By  
Sophie C. Hadida

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New York — London  
The Knickerbocker Press

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PITFALLS IN ENGLISH



Copyright, 1927

by

Sophie C. Hadida

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## FOREWORD

THERE is a reason for everything under the sun. There is a reason for every book—even though “of making many books there is no end.”

This book, however, is like no other book ever written or published. The difference lies in its origin and in its method.

It came to be, not because of its author, but because of YOU, its reader and owner. Wherever the author went, YOU furnished the material; YOU gave the ideas; YOU evoked the method.

Were YOU a graduate of a grammar school, of high school, of business college, or of university; were YOU represented in the marts of labor, business, or finance; were YOU stenographer, clerk, salesman, housewife, or society woman, YOU, each and all, made your contribution to this book; each of YOU is here embodied in one form or another.

Sometimes, walking on the street, riding in train or trolley, coming in contact with YOU at theater, lecture, or art gallery, at hotel or in your home, I have seen YOU carefully dressed, well groomed, and trim: but the casual word has

## Foreword

shown marked discrepancy between the dressing of your body and the dressing of your mind.

You would not want to appear anywhere unkempt, slovenly, frayed, or spotted. You know that such attire is a poor letter of introduction. Neat English, careful pronunciation, correct construction are equally essential in creating and continuing a good impression. Style is shown in speech as well as in dress and manner.

Well-chosen words, correctly pronounced and grammatically used, are the hall-mark of enlightened persons. They constitute your passport to culture and advancement. They are indispensable to progress in business and society. They mark your station; they open and close doors to further opportunity, to fuller enjoyment.

Have you had the advantages of only an elementary education, here is a book for your daily need. Have you had a secondary education, this book will supplement your knowledge. Have you had a college course, this book will recall forgotten, unused lessons.

*Pitfalls in English* is not a grammar. It is a friend who, interested in you, points out the mistakes which you unconsciously make, tells you why you make them, explains to you how to correct them, and shows you how to test the correctness of your decision.

## Foreword

*Pitfalls in English* is unlike any other textbook in English in that it contains not one technical term. As its name indicates, it points out the words in the use of which you should take particular care (*who, whom, lie, lay, affect, effect, I, me*, and many others), and gives infallible devices, in language which every one can understand, for the correct use of these words. It presents also many pitfalls of which to beware in pronunciation and punctuation. One section is devoted to correspondence.

Every question that may occur to you is anticipated and answered in order that you may feel that you are having individual instruction under a private teacher.

What more can you wish? No more uncertainty for you! Each word slips into its nook with ease and accuracy.

This compact little book is published in response to the compelling request of hundreds of enthusiastic young men and women who have taken the course somewhat abridged under the title of "English Improvement."

*Pitfalls* is dedicated to YOU and YOU and YOU and YOU.

. . . . .

My appreciation is heartily expressed to Sophie L. Blakeslee who put me into the profes-

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sional position which, because of the varied types of pupils, forced me to originate this method; to the interested pupils who have encouraged me to publish it; and to all my friends who have patiently tolerated my absorption in the work of preparing *Pitfalls in English*.

SOPHIE C. HADIDA

BUFFALO, NEW YORK  
September, 1927

## TRIBUTE

SOMETHING within you has spoken. You feel the urge for greater knowledge; else why would you have this book in your possession?

A key to a treasure is yours. Covet it. Once the treasure of good English is yours, you can walk with kings. None can take it from you.

Nothing is more beautiful than correct English, spoken or written in the simplest manner. A beautiful thought is at once marred if there be the slightest error in grammar.

As you study and learn you will grow. Your plane of living will change—the choicest literature will have poignant appeal; reading will take on new interest; you will grow more observant. You will not avoid persons who speak good English; you will seek them.

In your hand you hold this book, *Pitfalls in English*. You are fortunate indeed. It tells so simply how to correct common errors in English. Each lesson that illustrates a difficult point in grammar can be compared to an example in arithmetic. You can test your knowledge and prove the problem.

I am thoroughly familiar with the greater part of the contents of this book. Eight years

# Tribute

ago it was my privilege to have the author to teach me "Correct English." I did not have the book. The ease with which I mastered my "Pitfalls in English," due to the simplicity of the lessons, whetted my taste for more English.

Subsequently I became advertising director for one of the finest department stores in the country—a position I still hold.

I have known of other young persons who have studied under Miss Hadida, who have made great advancement in social and business life.

. . . . .

As we grow older life holds for us that which we have stored up within us.

Correct English enriches our lives—our thinking and understanding grow apace. Books read, leave their traces in our minds. We have put away thoughts, passages, experiences of others that we may call forth at our will. We shape our personalities. We find happiness.

From this book simply written, if you so desire, you may benefit greatly. You will enjoy reading it, studying it, making it your own. It was intended for you.

SOPHIE ALEXANDER

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

April 12, 1927

Pitfalls in English  
and  
How to Avoid Them



# Pitfalls in English and How to Avoid Them

## HOW ABOUT YOUR SPEECH?

Today you make up your mind that you are going to improve your speech, perhaps for the gratification of your critical friend who is about to spend a month with you; perhaps to avoid the unfavorable comments of your cousin who has just arrived from college; or maybe for the benefit of your employer who thinks that at times your language lapses into the ordinary. Maybe you have recently acquired a social acquaintance who, through the medium of correct English, seems to radiate a higher sort of mental atmosphere, the superiority of which you feel and into which you would like to be submerged. You wonder how you can, with minimum effort, time, and expense, attain maximum speech improvement.

You should take as much pride in your speech as in your appearance. If you aspire to social and business prestige, you should be ever watchful to keep your language correct, pleasing, and free from slang.

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Slang cripples your speech and causes you to appear at a disadvantage. If you always say "bawled us out" for "reprimanded" or "found fault with" or "criticized," you will entirely forget these expressions and when you wish to make a favorable impression, the correct words will not come to your aid, but your quick tongue will blurt out the vulgarity, "bawled us out."

There are some persons who argue that certain slang expressions are forceful. They are. "Pep" is an expressive word. Perhaps in a few years it will be included in the dictionary without the stigma of the term "colloquialism" or "vulgarity." Those, however, who constantly use "pep" forget that there are such legitimate words as "vivacity," "life," "animation," "vigor," which give an air of dignity and elegance to conversation.

The renovation of your speech will take time. You will find that you cannot eliminate in a short period all the errors which you have carelessly made during the years you have lived in disregard of the value of correct speech. Begin at once to discard the vulgarisms. To eliminate slang is possible whether you have had educational advantages or not, and for this purpose you require neither book nor teacher.

Do not pick up every new, popular, and pertinent expression that you hear on the vaude-

## How to Avoid Them

ville stage. If today a comedian uses the expression "old dear" and tomorrow you hear "old dear" used in lunch rooms, behind counters,—in fact, all over—be assured that that is the expression for you to avoid until you are reasonably certain that the ridiculous term of endearment is finding its way into the conversation of cultured persons and seems to be sanctioned by good writers. Such a word is "movies." At first the purist said "moving picture theater." A long expression for a popular amusement could not possibly survive. Now, those who were strong in their opposition to the word "movies," which they considered inelegant, are using it.

It ought not to be necessary to record illustrations of slang expressions when urging their elimination; but a few are presented because perhaps you do not realize how many cheap phrases you are using, and that many of them are classified as slang. Those marked with a single asterisk (\*) are inelegant, if not slang. The groups of two, three, and four asterisks refer to notes similarly marked.

### HOW MANY OF THESE ARE YOURS?

by gosh	*sub (substitute)
by golly	*subbing (substituting)
swipe	*I'm full up (I've had
kid (child)	sufficient)

## Pitfalls in English

*kiddies (children)	*I'm dry (I'm
stop your kiddin'	thirsty)
dope (drug)	I'll say
dope it out	I'll say so
what's the dope on	I'll tell the world
that	two bucks
vamp	buck up
bunch of us fellas	I'm shy a penny
*gang of us girls	(short)
get me	gink
I don't getcha	guy
bawl us out	swell
for land's sake	what do you know
you've said a	about that
mouthful	the darn thing
gave us an earful	ayah (yes)
cop	yep (yes)
**'nd everything	'atta boy
you betcha	cut it out
listen	hootch
listen here	booze
bet your life	I was sore at him
***see	what's doin'
****sure (yes)	what's new
****surely (certainly)	it sure does
talking through	believe me
your hat	they serve good
damn (profane)	eats
*flu (influenza)	bean (head)

## How to Avoid Them

There are many other undesirable expressions.

**\*\***Avoid the use of *'nd everything*.

*Poor:* The boy went down town to buy his schoolbooks *'nd everything*.

*Good:* The boy went down town to buy his schoolbooks.

**\*\*\***Avoid the use of *see*.

*Poor:* The doctor came at eight o'clock, *see*.  
After that no one was allowed to visit the patient, *see*. He had temperature, *see*; and the doctor was afraid that he might have diphtheria, *see*.

(This is no exaggeration.)

*Good:* The doctor came at eight o'clock. After that no one was allowed to visit the patient. He had temperature and the doctor was afraid that he might have diphtheria.

**\*\*\*\***Avoid the use of *sure, surely*, used in the following ways:

*Poor:* Excuse me please. *Sure*.

*Good:* Excuse me please. *Certainly*.

*Poor:* Excuse me please. *Surely*.

*Good:* Excuse me please. *Certainly*.

## Pitfalls in English

Begin today the lessons on the various problems presented in this little book which points out the pitfalls and shows you how to avoid them. Master each one before attacking the next. If you are conscious of a mistake, take the time to correct it, aloud or mentally, saying, for example, "I saw," when perhaps you have said, "I seen." If you are among intimates, pass your error off with a jocular ease, commenting, "There I am again! I meant to say, 'I felt bad—not badly.'" This will have the effect of making your associates careful of their speech and the result will be that the English in your immediate circle of friends will improve and react in a helpful way upon your own.

Do not lapse into carelessness, even for a moment, after making the resolution to improve your speech. Be as careful about your manner of expression, your voice, your pronunciation, with the man who collects the ashes as you are with your minister. At the end of six months you will have become so interested in correct English and so alive to its influence and power, beauty and charm, that you will pursue the subject further by reading in your moments of relaxation the best books obtainable and seeking the company of those who speak well; and you will get additional enjoyment from a fine lecture or sermon because, besides absorbing the

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thought expressed, you will be keenly alive, as never before, to the neat, orderly succession of words which every good speaker and writer employs.

### STUDY THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

WRONG: New York is larger than any city in the United States.

RIGHT: New York is larger than any *other* city in the United States.

RIGHT: New York is the largest city in the United States.

New York is in the United States. New York cannot be larger than itself.

### EXERCISE:

Substitute other names in place of *New York* and *city* and form original sentences using the word *other*.

### ILLUSTRATION:

Lake Superior is larger than any *other* of the Great Lakes.

John is taller than any *other* boy in his class.

### ALSO RIGHT:

Lake Superior is the largest of the Great Lakes.

John is the tallest boy in his class.

## Pitfalls in English

WRONG: Buffalo is *not as large as* Chicago.

RIGHT: Buffalo is *not so large as* Chicago.

See page 155.

If the word *not* were omitted, the two small words would be *as-as*. When the word *not* is used, it should be followed by *so* in sentences of this kind.

I am *as tall as* my sister—is correct because there is no *not* in the sentence.

### EXERCISE:

Originate many sentences, some with *not* and some without *not*, in which you compare two things. Use *as-as* when you do not use *not*; use *so-as* when you use *not*.

### ILLUSTRATION:

I am *not so* tall *as* you.

He is *as* bright *as* a dollar.

WRONG: You may go *providing* that you do not go near the water.

RIGHT: You may go *provided* that you do not go near the water.

See pages 223 and 224.

Originate many sentences until your ear becomes accustomed to the word *provided*.

### ILLUSTRATION:

I will give him a watch *provided* that he will not wear it to school.

## How to Avoid Them

WRONG: What kind of *a* car do you drive?

RIGHT: What kind of car do you drive?

See pages 119 and 120.

Make up many sentences similar to the correct one.

ILLUSTRATION:

I like that kind of sweater.

Wrong: 1. If *anyone* has lost *their* gloves, *they* will find them at the desk.

Wrong: 2. If *anybody* wants an apple, *they* may get it from me.

Wrong: 3. Everyone kept *their* hat on.

Wrong: 4. Everybody has *their* own cares.

Wrong: 5. Each *man* has *their* sister with *them*.

Right: 1. If *anyone* has lost *his* (*her*) gloves, *he* (*she*) may find them at the desk.

Right: 2. If *anybody* wants an apple, *he* (*she*) may get it from me.

Right: 3. Everyone kept *his* hat on.

Right: 4. Everybody has *his* own cares.

Right: 5. Each *man* has *his* sister with *him*.

See pages 162-165.

Wrong: I felt *badly* about the matter.

Right: I felt *bad* about the matter.

See pages 100-106.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* I saw in the paper *where* there was a fire over Smith's store.

*Right:* I saw in the paper *that* there was a fire over Smith's store.

*Never Say:*

I saw in the paper *where*

I saw in the magazine *where*

I saw in an article *where*

*Say:*

I saw in the paper *that*

I saw in the magazine *that*

I saw in an article *that*

*Wrong:* My sister is taller than *me*.

*Right:* My sister is taller than *I*.

*Wrong:* I am older than *him*.

*Right:* I am older than *he*.

*Wrong:* John is stouter than *her*.

*Right:* John is stouter than *she*.

*Wrong:* They are more advanced in their work than *us*.

*Right:* They are more advanced in their work than *we*.

*Wrong:* The teacher *learned* us a new poem.

*Right:* The teacher *taught* us a new poem.

See pages 159-160.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* I didn't do that; he *done* it.

*Right:* I didn't do that; he *did* it.

See page 177.

*Wrong:* They said that it was *alright* for me to do it.

*Right:* They said that it was *all right* for me to do it.

See page 210.

*Wrong:* If I *was* you I'd go.

*Right:* If I *were* you I'd go.

See pages 172 and 173.

*Wrong:* The water is *froze*.

*Right:* The water is *frozen*.

*Wrong:* Is that a *boughten* dress or did you make it?

*Right:* *Did you buy* that dress or did you make it?

*Right:* Is that a *ready-made* dress or did you make it?

*Wrong:* My sister—*she* died a year ago.

*Right:* *My sister died* a year ago.

*Wrong:* My teacher—*she* says that she likes history.

*Right:* *My teacher says* that she likes history.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* Her father *died away* a month ago.

*Right:* Her father *died* a month ago.

*Wrong:* He was *drowneded*.

*Right:* He was *drowned*. (Rhymes with *round*.)

See page 177.

*Wrong:* *Him* and I went.

*Right:* *He* and I went.

*Wrong:* Between you and *I*, I think he falsified.

*Right:* Between you and *me*, I think he falsified.

See pages 165–168.

*Wrong:* I didn't say *nothing*.

*Right:* I didn't say *anything*.

See pages 158 and 159.

*Wrong:* She is a *real* nice person.

*Right:* She is a *very* nice person.

*Wrong:* What is the pronunciation of this  
word?

*Right:* What is the pronunciation of this word?

See page 256.

*Wrong:* Either mother or father *are* sure to come.

*Right:* Either mother or father *is* sure to come.

See page 174.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* My *limbs* ache. (The speaker does not mean to include arms.)

*Right:* My *legs* ache.

My *limbs* ache . . . means *arms* and *legs* ache. (Limbs are arms and legs.)

*Wrong:* He *don't* sleep well.

*Right:* He *doesn't* sleep well.

See pages 343 and 344.

*Wrong:* Mother, *can* I go swimming today?

*Right:* Mother, *may* I go swimming today?

*May* is used in asking permission.

*Can* is not used in asking permission.

See pages 152-155.

*Wrong:* I *sure* did.

*Right:* I *certainly* did.

See \*\*\*\*, pages 6 and 7.

I *sure* did is a vulgarism.

I *surely* did is grammatically correct but

I *certainly* did is a better expression.

*Right:* Drive *slow*.                      or                      Drive *slowly*.

See pages 100-106.

Drive *slowly* is more generally known to be correct, but both are right. The dictionary will decide this for you if you understand how to obtain the information. If you do not under-

## Pitfalls in English

stand the dictionary, take the word of this book that both of these expressions are right.

*Wrong:* Did you get an *invite* to the wedding?

*Right:* Did you get an *invitation* to the wedding?

Never use the word *invite* for the invitation itself.

Use the word *invite* in this way:

I shall *invite* him.

Did he *invite* you?

*I shall invite him* means *I shall ask him to come*.

*Invite* is correct when the word *ask* can be substituted.

*Inelegant:* I am *sweating*. I am *sweaty*.

*Correct:* I am *perspiring*. Notice *per*; not *pres*.

(To say *pres-piring* is a mistake common to the illiterate.)

See pages 216 and 217.

If you wish to be considered polished, you will not use these expressions at all, unless you are talking to your physician. For two dollars he is willing to listen to your difficulty.

*Wrong:* *Will* I open the window?

*Right:* *Shall* I open the window?

Never say, *Will I*?

See page 145, "Sentence 2, group A."

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* *Would* you like to go?

*Right:* *Should* you like to go?

See pages 149-151.

Reasoning from *shall* and *will*, one would say,  
I *shall* like to go.

Therefore:

I *should* like to go.

In a question use the word (*shall* or *will*,  
*should* or *would*) that you expect in the reply.  
The reply in this sentence will be *I should*.

*Wrong:* There were two *people* on the stage.

*Right:* There were two *persons* on the stage.

See page 221.

Use *people* when you mean a mass.

The young *people* of the church.

The *people* of the United States.

*Poor:* May I borrow your pencil? *Sure!*

*Good:* May I borrow your pencil? *Certainly.*

(or) Yes, of course. (or) With pleasure.

*Poor:* I *sure* am tired.

*Good:* I *certainly* am tired.

*Poor:* Will you call her to the telephone? *Surely.*

*Good:* Will you call her to the telephone? *Cer-  
tainly.* (or) Yes, I will.

*Poor:* Why *sure!* (as an expression of agreement)

*Good:* Why *certainly.* (or) Of course. (or) I  
think so too.

## Pitfalls in English

Do not say *sure* when you mean *yes* or *certainly*.  
Correct uses of *sure* and *surely* are shown  
below:

Are you *sure* that John is out of town?

I shall *surely* be there.

See \*\*\*\*, pages 6 and 7.

*Wrong: I says, "Well, you just try it."*

*Right: I said, "Well, you just try it."*

*Wrong: I says to myself*

*Right: I said to myself*

*Wrong: Says I*

*Right: Said I*

*Wrong: I says, says I, "Bill must not do that."*

*Right: I said, "Bill must not do that."*

Never say, *I says*.

Never say, *Says I*.

*He says, she says*, are correct.

*Wrong: I seen you at the theater last evening.*

*Right: I saw you at the theater last evening.*

See page 178.

*Wrong: I only had five cents.*

*Right: I had only five cents.*

See pages 188 and 189.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* Aren't I?

*Right:* Am I not?

*Wrong:* She sat between *he* and *I*.

*Right:* She sat between *him* and *me*.

See pages 165-168.

*Wrong:* It was *him*.

*Right:* It was *he*.

See pages 94-100.

*Wrong:* *Who* do you want?

*Right:* *Whom* do you want?

See Exception, pages 76-84.

*Wrong:* *Who* did you speak to?

*Right:* *Whom* did you speak to?

*Right:* To *whom* did you speak?

See Exception, pages 76-84.

*Wrong:* How are you? *Nicely*, thank you.

*Right:* How are you? *Well*, I thank you.

*Wrong:* Did you *rense* the clothes?

*Wrong:* Did you *wrench* the clothes?

*Right:* Did you *rinse* the clothes?

See page 257.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* I went to a friend of *mine's* house.

*Right:* I went to the house of a friend of *mine*.

There is no such word as *mine's*.

*Wrong:* One of the boys' mothers told me about the entertainment.

*Right:* The mother of one of the boys told me about the entertainment.

See pages 51 and 52.

*Wrong:* Leave me off at Main Street.

*Right:* Let me off at Main Street.

See pages 191-193.

*Wrong:* Try to always avoid bad company.

*Right:* Always try to avoid bad company.

See pages 189-191.

*Wrong:* I should have liked to have gone.

*Right:* I should have liked to go.

*Wrong:* I seldom ever go.

*Right:* I seldom go.

*Wrong:* I rarely ever go to theater.

*Right:* I rarely go to theater.

*Wrong:* The book was *real* interesting.

*Right:* The book was *very* interesting. or The book was interesting.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* The reason that I was absent was *because* I was ill.

*Right:* The reason that I was absent was *that* I was ill.

*Right:* The reason for my absence was *that* I was ill.

*Right:* The reason for my absence was *illness*.

Never say: The *reason was because*.

If you are asked *why* you were absent, say:

I was absent *because* I was ill.

If you are asked the *reason* for your absence, say:

The reason was *that* I was ill.

*Because* answers the question, "Why?"

*Wrong:* I remember *of* seeing you at the bazaar.

*Right:* I remember seeing you at the bazaar.

Never say: *Remember of*.

*Wrong:* They had redecorated the *sleeper, diner,*  
and *smoker*.

*Right:* They had redecorated the *sleeping car,*  
the *dining car,* and the *smoking car*.

*Right:* They had redecorated the *sleeping, dining,*  
and *smoking cars*.

*Wrong:* Have you *anybody's else* bundles besides  
your own?

*Right:* Have you *anybody else's* bundles besides  
your own?

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* This is *somebody's else* umbrella.

*Right:* This is *somebody else's* umbrella.

*Wrong:* *Everybody's else* home is more attractive than ours.

*Right:* *Everybody else's* home is more attractive than ours.

See page 229.

*Wrong:* There's a fence *between* every house.

*Right:* The houses are separated by *fences*.

See pages 162, 163, 174, 208.

*Every house* means *every single house*. *Every* is treated as *one*. A fence cannot be between one house; *between* implies *two*.

*Wrong:* He does his work *good*.

*Right:* He does his work *well*.

*Right:* He is a *good* worker.

*Wrong:* *Them* apples make good pies.

*Right:* *These* apples make good pies. or *Those* apples make good pies.

Never put *them* before the name of a thing (apples).

See page 119.

*Wrong:* Are those books *yourn*?

*Right:* Are those books *yours*?

See page 53.

## How to Avoid Them

Some mistakes are worse than others in their effect upon your social standing. You might say *would* for *should*, or *should* for *would*, and not be considered ignorant; but to say *yourn* for *yours* is fatal to your social and business standing. Beware!

*Wrong:* Was you at the meeting yesterday?

*Right:* Were you at the meeting yesterday?

Never say *Was you?* This is as bad a mistake as *yourn* for *yours*.

*Wrong:* She's a widow woman. (A widow is a woman.)

*Right:* She's a widow.

*Right:* He's a widower. (A widower is a man.)

*Wrong:* I can't hardly see; it is so dark.

*Right:* I can hardly see; it is so dark.

See pages 158 and 159.

This is easy to understand if you think of the word *hardly* as meaning *with difficulty*. The sentence means that I *can* see only with difficulty. It does not mean that I *cannot* see with difficulty.

*Wrong:* He's a Christian Science. This is a common mistake.

*Right:* He's a Christian Scientist. He believes in Christian Science.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* Don't reopen that subject *again*. *Re* means *again*.

*Right:* Don't reopen that subject. *Reopen* means to *open again*.

*Wrong:* The soldiers are having their *sitting-up* drill.

*Right:* The soldiers are having their *setting-up* drill.

See pages 72 and 73.

Here *setting* does not mean *sitting*. *Setting-up* has the meaning of putting into good condition. A bit of fresh air *sets* one up in great shape.

*Wrong:* I *ain't* got no time.

*Right:* I *have* no time.

*Right:* I *haven't* any time.

*Right:* I *haven't* time.

See pages 158, 159, 236, 343.

*Wrong:* Willie had *a* egg for breakfast.

*Right:* Willie had *an* egg for breakfast.

See pages 231 and 232.

*Wrong:* *One* of the teachers *are* here.

*Wrong:* *One* of the teachers *have* come.

*Right:* *One* of the teachers *is* here. *One is* here.  
Disregard the other words.

*Right:* *One* of the teachers *has* come. *One has* come. Disregard the other words.

See page 174.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* *Would* you like to have John and *I* call  
for you?

*Right:* *Should* you like to have John and *me* call  
for you?

See pages 110–112, 149–151.

*Wrong:* This material is different *than* that.

*Wrong:* This material is different *to* that.

*Right:* This material is different *from* that.

Always say *different from*.

See pages 220 and 221.

*Wrong:* You *hadn't ought* to do that.

*Right:* You *ought not* to do that.

Never use *had* before *ought*.

*Wrong:* He *drunk* a glass of milk.

*Right:* He *drank* a glass of milk.

Use *drunk* with *has*, *have*, *had*.

See page 177.

*Wrong:* He *has drank* a glass of milk.

*Right:* He *has drunk* a glass of milk.

Do not use *has*, *have*, *had* with *drank*.

See page 177.

*Inelegant:* Mary *dove* from the pier.

*Better:* Mary *dived* from the pier.

See page 177.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* Kate *swum* a mile.

*Right:* Kate *swam* a mile.

Use *swum* with *has, have, had*.

See page 179.

*Wrong:* I *begun* the dress yesterday.

*Right:* I *began* the dress yesterday.

Use *begun* with *has, have, had*.

See page 176.

*Wrong:* We *run* over to see John last evening.

*Right:* We *ran* over to see John last evening.

Use *run* with *has, have, had*.

See page 178—column 3.

*Wrong:* He *come* over to see us last evening.

*Right:* He *came* over to see us last evening.

Use *come* with *has, have, had*.

See page 177—column 3.

*Wrong:* I *not only* saw James but I spoke to him.

*Right:* I *not only* saw James *but* I *also* spoke to him.

*Right:* I *not only* saw James but I spoke to him *as well*.

*Not only* should be followed by *but also* or *as well*.

See pages 155–157.

## How to Avoid Them

*Inelegant:* John *lit* the lamp.

*Better:* John *lighted* the lamp.

See page 178.

*Inelegant:* I *dreamt* all night long.

*Better:* I *dreamed* all night long.

See page 177.

*Common:* I went down town, *see*, and then it was too late to go to the meeting.

*Say:* I went down town and then it was too late to go to the meeting.

Do not unnecessarily introduce *see*.

See \*\*\*, pages 6 and 7.

\* *Wrong:* I am just *after* going to the store.

*Right:* I have just been to the store.

\* (This is provincial and incorrectly expresses the fact that the speaker has been to the store.)

*Wrong:* I'd rather have this *as* that.

*Right:* I'd rather have this *than* that.

*Wrong:* The book is *laying* on the bed.

*Right:* The book is *lying* on the bed.

*Persons* and also *things* *lie* if they are in a reclining or recumbent position.

See pages 62-69.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* The house is *het* by steam.

*Right:* The house is *heated* by steam.

Never use *het*.

See page 177.

*Wrong:* They gave it to him *free gratis*.

*Right:* They gave it to him *gratis*.

*Better:* They gave it to him *free* of charge.

(Do not make liberal use of foreign words.  
*Gratis* is Latin.)

*Wrong:* He *hurted* his arm.

*Right:* He *hurt* his arm.

See page 178.

*Wrong:* I *lended* him five dollars.

*Wrong:* I *loaned* him five dollars.

*Right:* I *lent* him five dollars.

See pages 178, 206, 207.

*Wrong:* The government *broadcasted* the message.

*Right:* The government *broadcast* the message.

See page 176.

*Wrong:* The wound *bleded* profusely.

*Right:* The wound *bled* profusely.

See page 176.

*Wrong:* He is home.

*Right:* He is *at* home.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* He fell off *of* the ladder.

*Right:* He fell off the ladder.

See page 160.

*Wrong:* He *attacked* the man while his wife looked on.

*Right:* He *attacked* (pronounced *attakt*) the man while his wife looked on.

See pages 176 and 247.

*Wrong:* Kate walked *acrosst* the street.

*Right:* Kate walked *across* the street.

See page 246.

*Wrong:* This *here* is not the kind I want.

*Right:* This is not the kind I want.

See page 120.

*Wrong:* This *here* one is mine.

*Right:* This one is mine.

See page 120.

*Wrong:* This *here* boy called me names.

*Right:* This boy called me names.

See page 120.

*Wrong:* Do you want this *here* one?

*Right:* Do you want this one?

See page 120.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* That *there* one is better.

*Right:* That one is better.

Never say: *This here* one.

*That there* one.

*These here* books.

*Those there* books.

Never, never say: *Them there*.

See page 120.

*Wrong:* Yourself and your friend are invited to come.

*Right:* *You* and your friend are invited to come.

See pages 106–110.

*Wrong:* How do you do? I'm well; *how's yourself?*

*Right:* How do you do? I'm well; *how are you?*

See pages 106–110.

*Wrong:* Every one had swum but *I*.

*Right:* Every one had swum but *me*.

See pages 168–172.

*Wrong:* Yesterday I *laid* on the couch.

*Right:* Yesterday I *lay* on the couch.

See pages 62–69.

*Wrong:* What do you think of *him* speaking to me like that?

## How to Avoid Them

*Right:* What do you think of *his* speaking to me like that?

See pages 55-61.

*Wrong:* Here *comes* the boys.

*Right:* Here *come* the boys.

By saying, "The *boys come* here," the reader will see that *comes* is incorrect.

See pages 131-134.

*Wrong:* Are there any good apples *amongst* them?

*Right:* Are there any good apples *among* them?

*Wrong:* You stay *whilst* I go.

*Right:* You stay *while* I go.

*Whilst* and *amongst* are archaic. (Find the meaning of *archaic* in your dictionary.)

*Poor:* She has been a *typewriter* ever since the death of her husband.

*Right:* She has been a *typist* ever since the death of her husband.

*Wrong:* Thank you, this is *plenty good enough*.

*Right:* Thank you, this is *good enough*.

*Wrong:* This is the *best* of the two.

*Right:* This is the *better* of the two.

See pages 122-127.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* There *was* a man and a woman sitting on the veranda.

*Right:* There *were* a man and a woman sitting on the veranda.

(A man and a woman *were* sitting there on the veranda.)

See pages 131-134.

*Colloquial:* Hens *set*.

*Better:* Hens *sit*.

See pages 69-73.

*Colloquial:* The dress *sets* well.

*Better:* The dress *sits* well.

See pages 69-73.

*Wrong:* He sits *in back of* me.

*Right:* He sits *behind* me.

*Wrong:* He had *nowheres* to go.

*Right:* He had *nowhere* to go.

*Wrong:* My *hairs* are curly. *They* need a shampoo.

*Right:* My *hair* is curly. *It* needs a shampoo.

*Wrong:* The *coals* have come. *They* are being carried in.

*Right:* The *coal* has come. *It* is being carried in.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* The United States *are* bounded on the north by Canada.

*Right:* The United States *is* bounded on the north by Canada.

*Right:* It is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean.

*United States* is the name of one country. We speak of *United States* as *it*; not *they*. We use *is*; not *are*.

*Wrong:* When I *first began* clerking I *yoost* to tire easily.

*Right:* When I *began* clerking I *used* (pronounced *yoozd*) to tire easily.

See page 259.

## CARELESS SPEECH

### *Wrong*

1. Please gimme that pencil.
2. Ayah, I will.
3. Did ju go to the concert?
4. Lemme see the program.
5. Her edjucation has been neglected.
6. Should ju like to go to Europe?
7. I was lookin' at the sky.
8. The boy kep' the secret.
9. Didde?

## Pitfalls in English

10. Give 'er the money.
11. Give 'im the money.
12. Have you seen thum?
13. Envirament has much to do with character.
14. The street is rapidly deteriating.
15. We were goin' along the street.
16. We were goeen along the street.
- \*17. I *laydown* after the doctor left.
18. Mebbe I'll go.
19. What is the *height* of the building?
20. Open the winda, please.
21. Lookut; this is fading.
22. There is a young fella at the box office.

### *Right*

1. Please give me that pencil.
2. Yes, I will.
3. Did you go to the concert?
4. Let me see the program.
5. Her ed-u-ca-tion has been neglected.
6. Should you like to go to Europe?
7. I was looking at the sky.
8. The boy kept the secret.
9. Did he?
10. Give her the money.
11. Give him the money.
12. Have you seen them?
13. Environment has much to do with character.

## How to Avoid Them

14. The street is rapidly deteriorating.
15. We were going along the street.
16. We were going along the street.
17. I lay down after the doctor left.
18. Maybe I'll go.
19. What is the height of the building?
20. Open the window, please.
21. Look; this is fading.
22. There is a young fellow at the box office.

In sentence 13 pronounce the second *n* in *environment*.

In sentence 14 pronounce the syllable *or*.

\*In sentence 17 separate *lay* from *down* when speaking, so that the two words together do not sound like *laid down*.

In sentence 19 *height* rhymes with *might*.

In the "wrong" sentences, there is not a mistake in grammar. This type of speech indicates slovenliness. The mistakes are those of both educated and uneducated persons. If you are guilty of any of these errors begin to eliminate them now.

## ONE THING—MORE THAN ONE THING

To most words that mean one thing add *s* to indicate more than one thing. The words in column A mean one thing. In column B, *s* has been added to indicate more than one thing.

## Pitfalls in English

A	B	A	B
pencil	pencils	machine	machines
book	books	hat	hats
chair	chairs	ribbon	ribbons
dog	dogs	nail	nails
house	houses	cat	cats
bed	beds	finger	fingers
bat	bats	hook	hooks
dot	dots	shoe	shoes
pen	pens	date	dates

Sometimes for the sake of euphony (sound) it is necessary to add *es* instead of *s*. You can readily see that *s* does not unite easily with *church*, *dress*, and other words found in columns C. If the word ends with *s*, *x*, *z*, *ch*, *sh*, add *es* instead of *s* to indicate more than one (columns D).

C	D	C	D
church	churches	dish	dishes
dress	dresses	wish	wishes
match	matches	tax	taxes
sash	sashes	witch	witches
box	boxes	adz	adzes

Words ending in *y* need attention. There are two groups.

- 1 Words ending in *y* preceded by any one of the five letters, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*.

## How to Avoid Them

To such words, add only *s* to indicate more than one.

*Boy* ends with *y* preceded by *o*. Therefore, *boys*.

- 2 Words ending in *y* preceded by any other letter than *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*.

In such words we change *y* to *ies*.

*Lady* ends with *y* preceded by *d* (not *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*). Therefore, *ladies*.

The following end with *y* preceded by various letters of the alphabet. See if you understand why the *s* is added to some words and why the *y* is changed to *ies* in others.

boy	boys	attorney	attorneys
monkey	monkeys	remedy	remedies
lady	ladies	key	keys
baby	babies	toy	toys
army	armies	bay	bays
turkey	turkeys	play	plays
essay	essays	ray	rays
story	stories	glory	glories

When a word ends with *f* sometimes *s* is added; sometimes the *f* is changed to *ves*.

To the group below, *s* is added.

hoof	hoofs	roof	roofs	proof	proofs
cliff	cliffs	safe	safes	scarf	scarfs
clef	clefs	chief	chiefs	chef	chefs

## Pitfalls in English

In the following, the *f* is changed to *ves*.

thief	thieves	loaf	loaves	half	halves
sheaf	sheaves	wharf	wharves	calf	calves

When a word ends with *o* we nearly always add only *s*. To a few we add *es*.

To the following, *s* is added.

piano	pianos	alto	altos
solo	solos	dynamo	dynamos
lasso	lassos	folio	folios

To the following, *es* is added.

potato	potatoes	hero	heroes
tomato	tomatoes	echo	echoes
negro	negroes	veto	veto

Memorize the following for which there is no definite rule:

man	men	child	children
ox	oxen	woman	women
foot	feet	tooth	teeth
mouse	mice	goose	geese

Some words are the same in both the form meaning one and the form which means more than one.

sheep	sheep	cannon	cannon
deer	deer	trout	trout
Japanese	Japanese	Portuguese	Portuguese

## How to Avoid Them

These are correct:

I killed a sheep.

He killed three sheep.

The cannon was imperfect.

Three cannon were purchased.

(*Cannons* is also correct.)

Two Japanese were sitting on the porch.

Some words seem always to mean more than one. Chief among these are:

spectacles   scissors   trousers   corsets   shears

Such words are used with *are*, *were*, *have been*; not with *is*, *was*, *has been*.

The spectacles are on the desk.

The scissors are not sharp.

Here are his trousers.

The corsets were made of silk.

The shears have been sharpened.

Although the words *news*, *politics*, *mathematics*, *physics*, *athletics*, and some others end with *s*, they require the words *is*, *was*, *has been*, etc.

The news was interesting.

Politics is a subject in which  
all should be interested.

Mathematics was my hardest  
subject.

# Pitfalls in English

Physics was not taught in our school.

Athletics is a part of the school curriculum.

For the use of such words as *group, crowd, family, committee, board, crew, flock, multitude, club, couple, society, fleet, tribe, band*, see pages 129–131, under *Troublesome Combinations*.

For the form which means more than one letter, figure, or sign, see page 342.

Memorize the following unusual forms:

man-of-war	men-of-war
mother-in-law	mothers-in-law
brother-in-law	brothers-in-law
Knight Templar	Knights Templars
hanger-on	hangers-on
commander in chief	commanders in chief

**IMPORTANT:** In every reputable dictionary the form which means more than one is given. If you are ever in doubt, do not guess how to write this form. Consult your dictionary. See pages 234–237.

## EXERCISE I

Write the forms which mean more than one, of the following words. Compare your answers with those on page 356, exercise 1.

## How to Avoid Them

joy	ship	table
rat	baby	piano
woman	lady	motto
church	ox	tomb
father-in-law	fox	scarf
sheep	knife	fish
leaf	nail	money

### POSSESSIVES

You will now learn what *possessive* means and how, when, and where to use and not to use the apostrophe to form the possessive. Though the explanation is long, you will find it clarifying and you will have no further trouble with the apostrophe.

Most persons think of the word *possessive* in connection with correct speech as indicating ownership. Limiting the word to this meaning causes many persons to omit the apostrophe in expressions like:

GROUP 1	{	a	a <i>year's</i> experience
		b	the <i>season's</i> greeting
		c	a <i>month's</i> hard word
		d	a <i>day's</i> pay
		e	a <i>year's</i> salary
		f	five <i>minutes'</i> time
		g	for <i>pity's</i> sake
		h	an <i>hour's</i> time
		i	five <i>hours'</i> time
		j	two <i>dollars'</i> worth

## Pitfalls in English

It is clear that the year did not possess the experience; the season did not own the greeting; the month did not own the work; the day did not own the pay; the year did not own the salary; minutes did not own the time. Still the italicized words require the apostrophe. The apostrophe and *s* or the apostrophe alone (*f*, *i*, *j*) may be considered to mean *of a*, *of an*, *of the*. When, instead of saying *the experience of a year*, we say *a year's experience*, we consider *year's* as a possessive and we exercise care to put the apostrophe in the correct place.

The preceding expressions mean:

GROUP 2	{	<i>a</i>	an experience of a year
		<i>b</i>	the greeting of the season
		<i>c</i>	the hard work of a month
		<i>d</i>	the pay of a day
		<i>e</i>	the salary of a year
		<i>f</i>	the time of five minutes
		<i>g</i>	for the sake of pity
		<i>h</i>	the time of an hour
		<i>i</i>	the time of five hours
		<i>j</i>	the worth of two dollars

In carefully studying the rule for the possessive form, you will see why the apostrophe is placed after the *s* in *minutes* (*f*—Group 1), in *hours* (*i*—Group 1), and in *dollars* (*j*—Group 1).

## How to Avoid Them

Notice that there is no apostrophe in expressions *f*, *i*, and *j*—Group 2.

The apostrophe appears only in written communications. It is important that this little character be placed in the correct spot so that one may not be judged as ignorant. It is only the illiterate who stick the apostrophe any place without reason, or omit it when it is required. It is such a simple trick to grasp that there is no excuse for not making the effort to understand it.

Here's the trick:

### PART I

\*If you are writing about a word that means *one thing* and you wish to indicate *possession, ownership, of a, of an, of the*, add an *apostrophe* and *s* regardless of the last letter of the word.

*a* A fox owns a tail

Possessive form would be fox's tail

*b* An ox owns a head

Possessive form would be ox's head

*c* A wolf owns a leg

Possessive form would be wolf's leg

*d* The howl *of the* wolf

Possessive form would be wolf's howl

*e* Mr. Rogers owns a home

Possessive form would be Mr. Rogers's  
home

# Pitfalls in English

*f* The profits of one year

Possessive form would be one year's profits

Notice that in spite of the fact that Rogers ends with *s*, an *apostrophe* and another *s* are added. *Rogers's* is the recent form. There are a few exceptions: *Jesus'*, *Cræsus'*. *Rogers'* was once in repute. (This may seem a small matter but business men and women should aim to be as stylish in English as they are in dress.)

\*Reiteration: Read the paragraph marked with an asterisk (\*). Study it and know it thoroughly before attacking the second part of this rule.

NOTE: *Rogers's* is pronounced *Rogers-es*.

## PART II

To write the possessive form of a word that means *more than one thing*:

If the word that means more than one thing ends with *s*, add only an *apostrophe*.

If the word that means more than one thing does not end with *s*, add an *apostrophe* and *s*.

Suppose you wish to write:

\*\*The women's hats were trimmed with exquisite flowers.

You must not write *The womens* and then

## How to Avoid Them

observe that *womens* ends with *s*; for you will erroneously add an apostrophe and you will have the following:

*Wrong:* The womens' hats were trimmed with exquisite flowers.

This is the way:

Write the word *The*. Then write the word that means more than one woman. You now have written *The women* and you see that *women* does not end with *s*. Therefore you add an *apostrophe and s* and, finishing the sentence, you will see that it is like the one marked with two asterisks (\*\*).

Suppose you wish to write:

\*\*\*The boys' dormitory was damaged by fire.

You write your first word *The*. Then you think how to spell the word that means more than one boy. It is *boys*. It ends with *s*. You add only an *apostrophe*. Finish the sentence and compare it with the one marked with three asterisks (\*\*\*).

**REMEMBER:** If the word means one thing, we do not consider its last letter.

If it does not end with *s*, we add an *apostrophe and s*.

If it does end with *s*, we do the same thing.

## Pitfalls in English

**BUT:** When the word means more than one thing and ends with *s*, we add *only an apostrophe*; when it does not end with *s*, we add both the *apostrophe and s*.

**CAUTION:** Not every word that ends with *s* is in the possessive form; therefore not every word that ends with *s* requires an apostrophe.

The soldiers' guns could be heard miles away.  
Possessive form.

The soldiers marched to the fort. Not possessive.

He owes me three months' salary. Possessive form.

He left three months ago. Not possessive.

Some writers incorrectly put an additional apostrophe in the word following the possessive.

*Wrong:* The boys' hats' were stolen.

*Right:* The boys' hats were stolen.

**CAUTION:**

Suppose you wish to write the possessive form of the word *wolves*. You write the word *wolves* and observing that it ends in *s*, you know that you must add an apostrophe. In adding it you incorrectly place it between the *e* and the *s*. That is not *adding*.

## How to Avoid Them

*Adding* means to place after.

*Wrong:* wolve's

*Right:* wolves'

*Wrong:* ladie's

*Right:* ladies'

### OBSERVATION:

Some argue that the following is incorrect:

Men's, women's, and children's clothing is for sale here.

They say that if the clothing is for sale, it is not yet possessed by the men, women, and children. They therefore omit the apostrophes. The fact that the writer may question, "Whose clothing?" and answer, "Men's, women's, and children's clothing," indicates that the words answering the question "Whose?" require apostrophes.

### STUDY THE FOLLOWING

1. The children's teacher is to call this afternoon. (Reasoning) More than one child is meant. The word is *children*. It does not end with *s*. Add both the apostrophe and *s*. *children's*. (Do not say to yourself that the *apostrophe* comes before the *s*. Say that you *added* an *apostrophe* and *s*.)

## Pitfalls in English

2. Ladies' wearing apparel is for sale here.  
(Reasoning) More than one lady is meant. The word is *ladies*. *Ladies* ends with *s*. Add only an apostrophe. *ladies'*
3. The man's butler speaks French. (Reasoning) One man is meant. The word is *man*. Disregard the end of the word. Add an *apostrophe* and *s*. *man's*
4. A minute's time wasted is never regained.  
(Reasoning) *A minute's time* means *the time of one minute*. The word is *minute*. Disregard the end of the word. Add an *apostrophe* and *s*. *minute's*
5. Why worry? It's all in the day's work.  
(Reasoning) The first apostrophe, the one in the word *it's*, shows that the letter *i* has been omitted. (Page 342) It does *not* indicate *ownership, possession, of a, of an, of the*. The second apostrophe is accounted for in the following way: work of the day. *Day* means one thing; therefore add an *apostrophe* and *s*. *day's*
6. Many years' experience has taught me to keep my business to myself. (Reasoning) *Many years' experience* means *the experience of many years*. *Years* means more than one year. *Years* ends with *s*.

## How to Avoid Them

Add an apostrophe. *years'* (Notice: Many years' *experience has* taught me. *Has* is correct. *Have* would be incorrect.)

7. He has had only one year's training. (Reasoning) One year is *year*. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *year's*
8. Mr. Glass's apartment is not so large as ours. (Reasoning) The name of one man is *Mr. Glass*. Disregard the end of the word. *Glass's*
9. John's position is a difficult one. (Reasoning) One man, *John*. Disregard the end of the word. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *John's*
10. Did you hear of Mr. Rogers's appointment? (Reasoning) This man's name is *Rogers*. *Rogers* ends with *s*. Disregard the fact as long as the word means only one. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *Rogers's*
11. Did you hear of Mr. Roger's appointment? (Reasoning) This man's name is *Roger*. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *Roger's*
12. The boy escaped by a hair's breadth. (Reasoning) Breadth of a hair. One *hair*. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *hair's*

## Pitfalls in English

13. The fox's tail is bushy. (Reasoning) One *fox*. Pay no attention to the spelling because we are speaking of only one fox. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *fox's*
14. The ox's head is shaggy. (Reasoning) One *ox*. Pay no attention to spelling. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *ox's* (Notice that there is no *e* in *ox's*.)
15. The foxes' tails are bushy. (Reasoning) More than one *fox*. *foxes* *Foxes* ends with *s*. Add an *apostrophe*. *foxes'*
16. The oxen's hoofs are clumsy. (Reasoning) More than one *ox*. *oxen* *Oxen* does not end with *s*. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *oxen's*
17. The deer's body is exquisitely graceful. (Reasoning) One *deer*. *deer* Add an *apostrophe and s*. *deer's*
18. The deer's bodies are graceful. (Reasoning) More than one *deer*. *deer* *Deer* does not end with *s*. Add an *apostrophe and s*. *deer's*
19. The horses were galloping along at a great rate. (Reasoning) *Horses* is not in the possessive form because *horses* do not own anything in this sentence. No *apostrophe*.

## How to Avoid Them

20. Five months ago I came to this country.  
(Reasoning) *Months* is not in the possessive form. *Months* do not own *ago*. We cannot say the *ago* of five months. Therefore there will be *no apostrophe* in this sentence.

If you thoroughly understand these sentences, you understand possessive.

Avoid the use of double possessives.

*Poor: My daughter's doctor's wife* is in New York.

*Good: The wife of my daughter's doctor* is in New York.

*Poor: Mr. Smith's stenographer's mother* is an artist.

*Good: The mother of Mr. Smith's stenographer* is an artist.

### AVOID SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS THE FOLLOWING:

*Poor: I went to the Superintendent of the Poor's office.*

*Good: I went to the office of the Superintendent of the Poor.*

*Poor: The Superintendent of Education's office* is in the Genesee Building.

*Good: The office of the Superintendent of Education* is in the Genesee Building.

## Pitfalls in English

*Poor: One of the men's wives* was hurt in the accident.

*Good: The wife of one of the men* was hurt in the accident.

*Poor: One of the children's mothers* called to see us.

*Good: The mother of one of the children* called to see us.

*\*Poor: The box's cover* was broken.

*Good: The cover of the box* was broken.

\*It is better not to use the apostrophe and *s* or the apostrophe alone with the name of an inanimate object (box).

### IMPORTANT

The following words are possessives, but are never written with an apostrophe:

*his, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs*

The word *its* is sometimes written with an apostrophe but when it is, it is not used as a possessive. *It's* means *it is*. The *i* has been omitted and in its place, an apostrophe has been inserted. (*Contractions*, pages 342 and 343.)

Study the following:

The baby's eyes are blue but its hair is black.  
Whose hair? *Its* hair.

## How to Avoid Them

Because *its* answers the question *whose* you will know that it is in the possessive form and you will not use an apostrophe.

It's a pleasant day. Here, *it's* is not a possessive. It means *it is*. The apostrophe shows that a letter has been omitted.

Read carefully:

*Right:* The marionette's arm was broken but *its* dancing continued. (no apostrophe in *its*)

*Right:* *It's* a very warm day. (apostrophe)

*Right:* These books are *theirs*. (no apostrophe)

*Right:* I thought that they were *yours*. (no apostrophe)

*Right:* I wish that they were *ours*. (no apostrophe)

If you do not wish to be considered ignorant, you will not say:

*hisn* for *his*, *hern* for *hers*, *ourn* for *ours*,  
*yourn* for *yours*, *theirn* for *theirs*.

Never say *youze* for *you*.

*Wrong:* Are *youze* going?

*Right:* Are *you* going?

### EXERCISE 2

Some of the following require an apostrophe and some do not. Supply the correct word and

## Pitfalls in English

include the apostrophe, if necessary. *Consult* page 356, exercise 2, after you have finished, to see if your work is correct.

### MODEL:

— clothes are constantly changing in style.  
(Woman)

### SOLUTION:

*Women's* clothes are constantly changing in style.

1. He is taking a four — course in a technical school. (year)
2. The table was set by the — butler. (man)
3. The — clerk demanded an increase of salary. (tailor)
4. He left without giving me a — warning. (moment)
5. Four — ago I entered the school. (year)
6. Mr. Peters stood the chair upon — legs. (it's or its)
7. — clothes are severe in style. (man)
8. We went to Mr. — home last evening. (Rogers)
9. We went to Mr. — home last evening. (Roger)
10. I think that — a business asset to speak correctly. (it's or its)
11. The — head was injured. (deer)

## How to Avoid Them

12. The —— heads were injured. (deer)
13. These books are —— . (theirs—theirs')
14. Mr. —— hat blew off. (Church)
15. —— violin is damaged. (Charles)
16. I wished him the —— greeting. (season)
17. Mr. Jones just left the —— coat here.  
(child)
18. Mr. —— just left the city. (Jones)
19. I want five —— worth of service. (dollar)
20. The —— vote will indicate what the feeling  
towards the matter is. (people)

## ANOTHER USE OF THE POSSESSIVE FORM

Review from page 41 to this point.

One indication of correct speech is the use of the possessive form before certain words ending with *ing*. The uneducated and even many educated persons make the mistake shown in the following:

(All of these are incorrect.)

1. What do you think of him going on the stage?
2. Do you approve of John becoming an actor?
3. Me not having the opportunity to go to school  
when I was young has made me more than  
eager to study now.

## Pitfalls in English

4. My father objected to me going.
5. On account of the meeting being held here we can not use the room for dancing.
6. Do you remember me writing to you about it?
7. Do you recall him telling us about it?
8. John had not heard of us planning the trip.

Should you have known that the preceding sentences were incorrect if you had heard your friends uttering these remarks?

### ARGUMENT

- Sentence 1 does not mean to ask what you think of *him*.
- Sentence 2 does not mean to ask if you approve of *John*.
- Sentence 3 is unpleasant to the ear. Only in the most unusual case would a sentence begin with *me, him, us, them*.
- Sentence 4 does not mean that my father objected to *me*.
- Sentence 5 It is not on account of the *meeting* that we can not use the room; it is because of the *holding* of the meeting in that particular room.

## How to Avoid Them

Sentence 6    The intention of this sentence is not to ask if you remember *me*. Certainly you remember *me*. The question is—Do you remember the *writing* done by me?

Sentence 7    does not mean to ask if you recall *him*. It means to ask if you recall the *telling* by him.

Sentence 8    You can readily see that the sentence does not mean that John had not heard of *us*.

In each of the following the word preceding the word ending with *ing* is in the possessive form. (See pages 41–55 for instruction on apostrophe.)

Sentences 1–8 should read:

1. What do you think of *his* going on the stage?  
(The reply might be, “It’s a good idea.”)
2. Do you approve of *John’s* becoming an actor?
3. *My* not having the opportunity to go to school when I was young has made me more than eager to study now.
4. My father objected to *my* going.
- \*5. On account of the *meeting’s* being held here we can not use the room for dancing.
6. Do you remember *my* writing to you about it?
7. Do you recall *his* telling us about it?
8. John had not heard of *our* planning the trip.

## Pitfalls in English

\*Caution: Suppose that the name of the organization which was holding a meeting should be mentioned in sentence 5. Let us say, for example, the Rotary Club.

It would be incorrect to say:

On account of the meeting's of the Rotary Club being held here we can not use the room for dancing.

It would also be incorrect to omit the apostrophe and *s*.

When you find yourself in such a difficulty, reconstruct your sentence, perhaps like the following:

Since the Rotary Club is holding a *meeting* in this room, we can not use it for dancing.

Notice that not every word that ends with *ing* must be preceded by a word in the possessive form.

1. The doctor, running up the steps, slipped and broke his leg.

The doctor slipped and broke his leg (while running up the steps).

2. *The doctor's running up the steps* (not the doctor) *disturbed* the patient. Whose running disturbed the patient? The doctor's running.

## How to Avoid Them

Sentence 1 is correct *without the apostrophe and s.*

Sentence 2 *requires the apostrophe and s.*

3. The robber, breaking into the house, stumbled over the ladder.

The robber stumbled over the ladder (while breaking into the house).

4. *The robber's breaking into the house was a violation of the law.*

What was a violation? *The breaking into the house was a violation.*

The robber was not a violation. Therefore it would be wrong to say:

The robber, breaking into the house, was a violation of the law.

Sentence 3 is correct *without the apostrophe and s.*

Sentence 4 *requires the apostrophe and s.*

### DEVICE

When you use one of these troublesome *ing* words preceded by the name of a thing (doctor, robber, etc.), *try the possessive form first*. If the possessive form can be used, it is correct. If it cannot be used, use the other word. Do not try the other form first.

## Pitfalls in English

### ILLUSTRATION:

Take the first sentence from the group below. Suppose that you say:

It was *we* coming in late that annoyed the chairman. *We* may not sound bad to your ear. You will then think that it is correct and use it. But *we* is wrong. Had you tried the possessive form (*our*) first, you would have found that it could be used. It was *our* coming in late that annoyed the chairman. Do not forget this warning: *Try the possessive form first* and if a sensible sentence results, the possessive form is correct.

### EXERCISE 3

Supply the correct word in the following. Compare your answers with those on page 357, exercise 3.

1. It was (we-our-us) coming in late that annoyed the chairman.
2. Does (we-our-us) walking in the upper apartment disturb you?
3. (We-our-us), arriving late, took seats in the rear of the room.
4. Do you like (we-our-us) calling to see you daily?
5. The (note-note's) falling due on Sunday gives us one day longer.

## How to Avoid Them

6. (It-its) falling due on Sunday gives us one day longer.
7. (It-its), falling due on Sunday, can be paid on Monday.
8. (I-my-me) not wanting the carpenter on Monday left him free to go to you.
9. (I-my-me), not wanting the carpenter on Monday, telephoned to you that you might have him for the day.
10. What do you think of the idea of (my-me) studying to be a doctor?
11. Had you heard of (our-us) going to Europe?
12. Did (I-my-me) going change your plans?
13. The (plumber-plumber's) coming late upset my plans.
- \*14. The (children-children's) being absent annoyed the teacher.
15. The (ladies-ladies') wearing of expensive gowns indicated the extravagance of the times.
16. He does not approve of (Mary-Mary's) traveling alone.

\*It is very clear that the *apostrophe with s* is required in sentence 14. Without the *apostrophe and s* the sentence would read:

The children, being absent, annoyed the teacher.

If they were absent, how could they annoy?

# Pitfalls in English

## LIE—LAY

To use *lie* and *lay* correctly requires a knowledge of their difference in meaning and application, and also the memorizing of eight little words.

Here they are:

Memorize the first four from left to right; then memorize the second four.

	Present (See Note a, p. 67.)	Past	Ing form (See Note b, p. 67.)	Use with <i>has, have,</i> <i>had</i>
1. To recline	lie	lay	lying	lain
2. To place an object	lay	laid	laying	laid

Practice saying all of groups 1 and 2 accurately and rapidly.

## DEVICE

Step *a*. Decide whether the use to which the word is to be put carries the idea of reclining or of placing an object.

Step *b*. If it carries the idea of reclining, eliminate the four words in group 2.

If it carries the idea of placing an object, eliminate the four words in group 1.

Step *c*. If you have used *has, have, had*, in your sentence, you select one of the words under *has, have, had*.

## How to Avoid Them

If you need the *ing* form, you use it.

If you are speaking of the present time, you use the word under *Present*.

If you are speaking of the past, you use the word under *Past*.

### APPLICATION OF DEVICE

1. Father —— down whenever he feels ill.

Step *a*. Decide whether reclining or placing an object. Answer: *reclining*.

- b*. Eliminate four words of group 2.

This sentence is obviously in the present.

- c*. The word required is *lies*.

Therefore: Father *lies* down whenever he feels ill.

2. The gloves are —— on the bureau.

Step *a*. Decide. Answer: *reclining*.

- b*. Eliminate four words in group 2.

- c*. The *ing* form is required with *are*. *lying*

Therefore: The gloves are *lying* on the bureau.

3. Rover —— in the sun all yesterday morning.

Step *a*. Decide. Rover *reclined*.

- b*. Eliminate four words in group 2.

- c*. *Yesterday* indicates past time. The required word is *lay*.

## Pitfalls in English

Therefore: Rover *lay* in the sun all yesterday morning.

4. These crumbs have —— here long enough.

Step *a*. Decide. *Reclining* idea is intended.

*b*. Eliminate the four words in group 2.

*c*. The word *have* requires the word *lain*.

Therefore: These crumbs have *lain* here long enough.

5. I know just where to —— the blame.

Step *a*. Decide. This obviously means to *place*.

Place what? Place blame.

*b*. Eliminate the four words in group 1.

*c*. Choose the correct word from the remaining four. *lay*

Therefore: I know just where to *lay* the blame.

6. He —— the books there a few moments ago.

Step *a*. Decide. This means *placed*.

*b*. Eliminate the other four words.

*c*. Choose the one needed. *Moments ago* indicates past. *laid*

Therefore: He *laid* the books there a few moments ago.

7. I am now —— the clothes in the drawer.

Step *a*. Decide. This means *placing*.

## How to Avoid Them

b. Eliminate the four words referring to reclining.

c. Choose one of the remaining four. The *ing* form is needed with *am*. *laying*

Therefore: I *am* now *laying* the clothes in the drawer.

8. The hen — three eggs in three days.

Step a. Decide. This means *placed*. (*Deposited*.)

b. Eliminate the other four words.

c. The sentence may be construed to mean either present or past. *lays* or *laid*

Therefore: The hen *lays* (or *laid*) three eggs in three days.

9. Mary has just — the baby in the crib.

Step a. Decide. *Placed*

b. Eliminate.

c. The word *has* requires *laid*.

Therefore: Mary *has* just *laid* the baby in the crib.

10. — down, Rover.

Step a. Decide. *Recline*

b. Eliminate.

c. Choose. This means that Rover must recline now. present *lie*

Therefore: *Lie* down, Rover.

## Pitfalls in English

The most common error in the use of the eight *lie* and *lay* words occurs in the past form of the reclining group which is *lay*.

*Wrong:* I *laid* down for an hour this morning.

*Right:* I *lay* down for an hour this morning.

In using the expression *lay down* be careful to enunciate the words clearly in order to prevent the uniting of *lay* and *down* in such a way as to cause them to sound like *layd down*. Say *lay* distinctly; then say *down*.

Many persons think that *lie* is applied only to persons. They know that it is correct to say, "The *woman lies* on the couch." They think that it is incorrect to say that the *umbrella lies*. Do not argue that the umbrella could not *lie* on the couch unless some one placed it there. That is true; but unless the sentence states that some person or animal or abstract agent deposited the object, the reclining words must be used.

The following are correct:

1. The *gloves lie* on the table. recline
2. The *blame lies* with you. rests (reclines)
3. The *dog lies* on the grass. reclines
4. The *baby lies* in its crib. reclines
5. *It lies there* by the hour without crying.  
reclines

## How to Avoid Them

6. *Father lies* down every afternoon. reclines
7. The *trouble lies* in his poor home training.  
rests (reclines)
8. The *matter lies* in his hands. rests (reclines)
9. *He laid* the umbrella upon the bed. placed
10. The *dog laid* the bone on the step. placed
11. The *decision laid* stress upon the prisoner's  
defect. placed
12. The tomatoes *lay* in the sun for two days  
before turning red. reclined

In 9 a person placed an object.

In 10 an animal placed an object.

In 11 an abstract agent (*decision*) placed an abstract object (*stress*).

Note *a*: Use the words *shall, will, do, does, did, may, can, must, might, could, should, would, to*, with the *present* form in both groups of words.

Note *b*: Use the words *am, is, are, was, were*, with the *ing* form in both groups of words.

### ILLUSTRATION

1. I *shall lie* down for a few moments.
2. I *will lie* down whether you approve or not.
3. *Do lie* down now.
4. *Does he lie* down every afternoon? He  
*does lie* down.

## Pitfalls in English

5. I *did lie* down just to satisfy you. See Note c.
6. Mother *is lying* on the couch.

Note c: Even though *did* is past time, it is used with the present.

To falsify—      *lie*      *lied*      *lying*      *lied*

1. I *lie* to my teacher but I know that it is wrong.
2. I *did lie* to the officer.
3. I *lied* to the woman.
4. He *is lying* to his mother.
5. I hope that you *have not lied* to your father.

### EXERCISE 4

Supply the correct *lie* and *lay* words in the following sentences:

Compare your answers with those on page 359, exercise 4.

1. He certainly does like to —— in the sun.
2. Yesterday Rover —— in the sun all morning.
3. Shall I —— here?
4. Shall I —— the package here?
5. Mother is —— down; don't disturb her.
6. Father —— my books on the table this morning.
7. Father was —— down but he is in the garden now.

## How to Avoid Them

8. I will —— down if you insist.
9. Did you —— down yesterday as the doctor ordered?
10. Mary —— in the hammock all yesterday afternoon.
11. The responsibility —— with the railroad company.
12. The responsibility —— with the railroad company; so Mr. Jones forced prompt payment for the injury to his property.
13. Mary is —— the clothes away now.
14. She ——; she is not to be trusted.
15. Have you —— down at all today?
16. I had just —— down when the bell rang.
17. —— down, Rover.
18. —— the hat in the box.
19. The children —— everything around. It is impossible to keep order.
20. He has —— your hat on the piano; please put it away.

### SIT—SET

	Present	Past	Ing form	With <i>has,</i> <i>have, had</i>
--	---------	------	----------	--------------------------------------

1. To repose  
upon (as on  
a seat)

sit	sat	sitting	sat
-----	-----	---------	-----

2. To place an  
object

set	set	setting	set
-----	-----	---------	-----

## Pitfalls in English

1. I sit in the front seat every Sunday at church.
2. She sat over there yesterday.
3. He is sitting there now.
4. They have sat there all evening.

Sentences 1, 2, 3, 4 show the use of group 1 (to repose upon).

5. Set the kettle over there.
6. He set it there yesterday.
7. I am setting the things on the shelf.
8. He has set the books on the table.

Sentences 5, 6, 7, 8 show the use of group 2 (to place an object).

9. The dress sits well (reposes on the body of its owner).
10. The sitting hen was frightened from her nest.
11. The hen is sitting on the nest.
12. Hens sit (repose).

If sentences 9, 10, 11, 12 surprise you, do not argue that your dressmaker and farmer use *sits* and *sitting*. They are authorities on dressmaking and farming but not on English.

# How to Avoid Them

## DEVICE

(Notes *a*, *b*, *c* on pages 67 and 68 under *Lie* and *Lay* apply to *sit* and *set*.)

Step *a*. Decide whether the use to which the word is to be put carries the idea of reposing or of placing an object.

Step *b*. If it carries the idea of reposing, eliminate the four words in group 2.

If it carries the idea of placing an object, eliminate the four words in group 1.

In either case you have left only four words (instead of eight) from which to choose the required word as directed in Step *c*.

Step *c*. If you have used *has*, *have*, *had* in your sentence, you select one of the words under *has*, *have*, *had*.

If you need the *ing* form, you use it.

If you need either of the other forms, you use it.

## APPLICATION OF DEVICE

1. I ——— waiting for you until I fell asleep.

Step *a*. Decide whether reposing or placing.

Answer: *reposing*.

*b*. Eliminate four words of group 2.

*c*. Choose. *Until I fell asleep* indicates past, *sat*.

## Pitfalls in English

Therefore: I *sat* waiting for you until I fell asleep.

### EXERCISE 5

Supply the correct word in the following and compare your answers with those on page 360, exercise 5.

1. The —— hen could be seen from my window.
2. Does my coat —— well across the shoulders?
3. He is —— in the other room.
4. I have —— here exactly one hour.
5. He has —— the table (placed the dishes).
6. I —— the table for mother.
7. Will you please —— this down for me?
8. The woman is —— in the hall.
9. Do you —— there?
10. I —— there yesterday.

### CAUTIONS

1. In the United States army there is used a drill called the “setting-up drill.” Many persons use the word *sitting-up* for *setting-up*. The word *setting* in this case has no reference to reposing in a chair. It means to put into a given condition or state—

## How to Avoid Them

put you in good shape—the exercise sets you up, so to speak, for the day's work.

The setting-up drills are now given in many public schools for the purpose of making the children fit for the day's work.

Remember to say *setting-up drill*.

2. Some dictionaries give *fits* as a meaning for *sets*. *Sets* is then marked "colloquial." This means that the word is not so desirable as the word *sits* for this particular meaning. Perhaps in time to come the word *sets* will be used in this way and will not be marked "colloquial." Until such time you will be using correct and accurate English if you say, *The dress sits well*.

### RISE—ARISE—RAISE

Apply Notes *a, b, c*, pages 67 and 68.

Present	Past	Ing form	With <i>has, have, had</i>
---------	------	----------	----------------------------

To assume an  
erect posi-  
tion

rise	rose	rising	risen
------	------	--------	-------

To assume an  
erect posi-  
tion

arise	arose	arising	arisen
-------	-------	---------	--------

## Pitfalls in English

To lift an ob-

ject	raise	raised	raising	raised
------	-------	--------	---------	--------

To increase	raise	raised	raising	raised
-------------	-------	--------	---------	--------

To produce

from seed

or egg	raise	raised	raising	raised
--------	-------	--------	---------	--------

The next twenty sentences show the correct use of these words.

1. I always rise at seven o'clock.
2. Yesterday I rose at seven, although I did not have to go to business.
3. John is rising at six o'clock this week to get an early start.
4. He has already risen.
5. We arise at eight o'clock when we are in the country.
6. Yesterday we arose at seven.
7. He is arising now.
8. He has arisen.
9. Please raise the windows and put up the shades.
10. He raised the brackets higher on the wall.
11. He is raising the shades to admit more light.
12. He has raised the shelves two notches higher.
13. John may raise his salary if he does well.
14. John raised the salaries of his employees.

## How to Avoid Them

15. I had raised his salary just before he resigned.
16. I am gradually raising the salaries of the men.
17. He raises chickens.
18. They raised wheat and corn in quantities.
19. Are they raising poultry?
20. I have raised a few chickens.

### EXERCISE 6

Supply the correct word in the following.

Compare your answers with those on page 361, exercise 6.

1. Has he —— yet?
2. What time do you —— daily?
3. Did Mr. Brown —— the salaries of his men?
4. Last week we —— every day at seven o'clock.
5. What are you —— on your farm?
- \* 6. Where were your children ——?
- \*\* 7. A —— in salary was given me last week.
8. Please —— the window; it is warm here.
9. He —— the question which caused the argument.
10. The sun has ——.
11. ——, please, when your guests enter the room.

## Pitfalls in English

12. A gentleman always —— when a lady enters the room.
13. What time does the sun —— now?
14. It —— at five or a little later.
15. Yesterday it —— a little earlier.
16. Bread —— through the use of yeast.

\*Do not speak of *raising* children. Use *rear*, *reared*, *rearing*.

\*\*Do not speak of a *raise* in salary when you mean an *increase*. Speak of a *rise* in wages or salary. If you do not care to use *rise*, use *increase*.

*Rise*, meaning the increase itself (not *to increase*) may be pronounced to rhyme with *prize* or *price*. The former is more commonly used and is given the preference in the Standard Dictionary and in Webster's Dictionary. (Do not be confused by the sound equivalents and the diacritical marks in any dictionary. Be sure to master them before deciding upon the pronunciation of a word.)

## WHO—WHOM

Many persons not sure of their English often pick up from their better educated friends the word *whom*. They observe that *whom* often comes in the middle of the sentence; hence they incorrectly use it in the following way:

## How to Avoid Them

The man *whom* I knew was the doctor stood waiting at the door.

In the preceding sentence *whom* should be *who*.

### AN INFALLIBLE DEVICE

Step *a*. Combine mentally or on paper the two sections that make sense.

Step *b*. In the remaining part insert at the first possible point the word *he* or *him*.

Step *c*. If you have inserted *he*, use *who*; if you have inserted *him*, use *whom*.

Exception: If the sentence is a question, omit Step *a*; follow *b* and *c*.

Caution 1: Use every word in the sentence when applying this device.

Do not use an extra word.

Caution 2: Insert *he* or *him* whether a man or a woman is mentioned in the sentence.

Caution 3: Insert *he* or *him* whether one or more than one person is meant.

(The student may use *she* and *her*, *they* and *them*, as necessity requires, if he prefers. If *she* or *they* is used, the required word is *who*; if *her* or *them* is used, the required word is *whom*. Using *he*

# Pitfalls in English

and *him*, regardless of sex or number, makes the matter of decision a simple one.)

## APPLICATION OF DEVICE

1. The woman — I interviewed could give me no information.

Step a. *The woman could give me no information.* (These parts combine to make sense.)

- b. There are two remaining words. Insert the word *him* at the first possible point.

The remaining words are: *I interviewed.* I interviewed *him*.

- c. Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*. (Read Caution 2.)

Therefore: The woman *whom* I interviewed could give me no information.

2. The person — I thought would speak merely introduced the speaker.

Step a. *The person merely introduced the speaker.* (These parts combine to make sense.)

- b. There are four remaining words. Insert the word *he* or *him* at the

## How to Avoid Them

first possible point. The remaining words are: *I thought would speak*. I thought *he* would speak.

- c. Having used *he*, I know that the required word is *who*.

Therefore: The person *who* I thought would speak merely introduced the speaker.

3. The woman —— I thought to be a brilliant speaker failed to make her point.

Step a. *The woman failed to make her point.*  
(These parts combine to make sense.)

- b. There are seven remaining words.  
Insert *he* or *him* at the first possible point.

Remaining words: I thought to be a brilliant speaker. I thought *him* to be a brilliant speaker.

- c. Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*.

Therefore: The woman *whom* I thought to be a brilliant speaker failed to make her point.

4. The man —— I considered capable was not appointed.

Step a. *The man was not appointed.* (These parts combine to make sense.)

## Pitfalls in English

- b. There are three remaining words.  
Insert *he* or *him* at the first possible point.

Remaining words: I considered capable. I considered *him* capable.

- c. Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*.

Therefore: The man *whom* I considered capable was not appointed.

5. The woman — I considered was capable was not appointed.

Step a. *The woman was not appointed.*  
(These parts combine to make sense.)

- b. There are four remaining words.  
Insert *he* or *him* at the first possible point.

Remaining words: I considered was capable. I considered *he* was capable.

- c. Having used *he*, I know that the required word is *who*.

Therefore: The woman *who* I considered was capable was not appointed.

6. I appointed the woman — I considered to be capable.

## How to Avoid Them

Step a. *I appointed the woman.* (These parts combine to make sense.)

b. There are five remaining words. Insert *he* or *him* at the first possible point.

Remaining words: I considered to be capable. I considered *him* to be capable.

c. Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*.

Therefore: I appointed the woman *whom* I considered to be capable.

(The following are questions. Refer to *exception* at the beginning of the lesson.)

7. — do you wish to see?

Do you wish to see *him*?

Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*.

Therefore: *Whom* do you wish to see?

8. — do you want?

Do you want *him*?

Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*.

Therefore: *Whom* do you want?

9. — did you say called?

Did you say *he* called?

Having used *he*, the required word is *who*.

Therefore: *Who* did you say called?

## Pitfalls in English

10. — do you think it was?

Do you think it was *he*? (It was *he* not It was *him*.) See pages 94–96 for explanation.  
Having used *he*, I know that the required word is *who*.

Therefore: *Who* do you think it was?

11. To — did you give the book?

Did you give the book to *him*?

Having used *him*, I know that the required word is *whom*.

Therefore: To *whom* did you give the book?

Note: *Whom* did you give the book *to*, is not incorrect, but *To whom* did you give the book, is better style.

### EXERCISE 7

Supply *who* or *whom* in each of the following.  
Compare your answers with those on page 362, exercise 7.

1. The criminal — alienists say is normal should be punished.
2. The man — the alienists judged as normal should be punished.
3. The man — alienists consider to be normal should be punished.
- \*4. The boy — I thought artistic failed in his drawing examination.

## How to Avoid Them

5. They invited the members —— the records showed were in good standing.
6. They invited the members —— were thought to be in good standing.
7. They invited the members —— the officers had not invited.
8. To —— did you speak?
9. —— shall I say called?
10. —— shall I call?
11. —— did you sit behind at the concert?
12. From —— did you receive the gift?
13. The woman, —— I knew to be your sister, rang the bell.
14. The woman, —— I knew was your sister, rang the bell.
15. The woman —— I knew was your sister.
16. The boys —— wished to obtain positions for the summer did not go to camp.
17. The man —— I thought capable obtained the position.
18. The woman —— I took to be your sister was really you.
19. —— is there?
20. —— did you ask for the privilege?

\*On page 77, Caution 1 warns you not to use an extra word. Sentence 4 shows the necessity for care upon this point. Explanation:

Suppose that you insert *he was* (*was* being the

## Pitfalls in English

extra word) after the word *thought*—I thought *he was* artistic. Having inserted *he* you would think that *who* would be the correct word. *Who* would be wrong and your error would be the result of having inserted the extra word *was*.

The application of the device should be: I thought *him* artistic.

Remember that thought is quicker than speech. It takes only an instant to apply this simple, infallible device.

Say over and over to yourself, aloud, and to your family, until your ear becomes accustomed to them, the expressions which follow:

to *whom*, of *whom*, with *whom*, between *whom*,  
near *whom*, behind *whom*, among *whom*.

When to use *who*, *which*, *that*:

(a) *Who* is used in speaking of *persons* only.

The *man who* lives there is my uncle.

(b) *Which* is applied to *animals* and *things*.

The *horse, which* belonged to my father, was shot today. (animal)

The *house, which* was of Colonial type, was being torn down. (thing)

(c) *That* is used for *persons*, *animals*, and *things*.

The *man that* called today was shabbily dressed. (person)

## How to Avoid Them

Better:

(The *man who* called today was shabbily dressed.) See (a)

That is the *cow that* gives the fine milk.  
(animal)

I selected the *book that* John gave you for Christmas. (thing)

*Whose* should be applied only to *persons*.

*Right:* The *man whose* notes I borrowed has left the city. (person)

*Wrong:* The *novel whose* English is good is a delight. (thing)

*Right:* The novel, the English of *which* is good, is a delight.

### AFFECT—EFFECT

#### EXERCISE 8

In books, newspapers, social and business letters these two words are used incorrectly more often than any others. Perhaps you think that you understand their use. If you do, try to supply these words and compare your answers with those on page 363, exercise 8. Do not look at the answers until you have written the next six sentences.

1. What was the — of the medicine?
2. He tried to — peace in the organization.

## Pitfalls in English

3. His ——s were moved into the street.
4. The law will go into —— the first of the year.
5. The —— was immediate.
6. In ——ing a reconciliation between the brother and sister he lost the friendship of both.

By this time you have consulted the answers and you are probably a bit surprised.

### EXERCISE 9

How about these? After deciding consult answers, page 363, exercise 9.

7. What —— does that type of person have upon you?
8. What —— does the medicine have?
9. How did the medicine —— you?
10. That man ——s me unpleasantly.
11. That man ——s harmony in whatever organization he enters.
12. The girl has an ——ed manner.
13. The music deeply ——ed me.
14. Dr. Ross's sermons —— me.

Now study the device. Remember: I am telling you that it will seem silly, but it is an infallible device and that is what you want; isn't it?

# How to Avoid Them

## DEVICE

Step a. Substitute the expression *bring about*, *brought about*, or *bringing about* in place of the required word.

If *bring about*, *brought about*, *bringing about* can be used, the required word is *effect*, *effected*, or *affecting*.

Step b. If not one of these expressions can be used, try the word *result*. If it can be used, the required word is *effect*.

Step c. If not any one of these expressions can be used, the required word is *affect*, *affected*, or *affecting*.

Caution 1. Be sure to try steps *a* and *b* first.

Caution 2. Do not put any word between *bring* and *about*.

Caution 3. *Effect* will never be correct before any word that means a person: *me*, *you*, *woman*, *George*.

## ILLUSTRATION

1. What was the — of the treatment?

Step a. What was the *bring about* of the treatment?

Silly! No sense to that.

b. What was the *result* of the treatment?

That sounds all right. The word is *effect*.

## Pitfalls in English

Therefore: What was the *effect* of the treatment? (Simple?)

2. How can we — permanent peace among the nations of the world?

Step *a*. How can we *bring about* permanent peace among the nations of the world?

*Bring about* fits as nicely as your new glove.

Therefore: How can we *effect* permanent peace among the nations of the world?

3. Did his remarks — you?

Step *a*. Did his remarks *bring about* you?  
Silly! No sense to that.

*b*. Did his remarks *result* you? Silly!  
No sense to that.

*c*. Since neither meaning of *effect* applies, the required word is *affect*.

Therefore: Did his remarks *affect* you?

Suppose you had forgotten to observe Caution  
2. Caution 2 requests that you do not put a word between *bring* and *about*. Suppose that you had said:

Did his remarks *bring you about*?

You might consider this to mean that in an argument a man's remarks convinced you or

## How to Avoid Them

brought you over to the other side of the question. In that case you would think that *bring about* could be applied and you would supply *effect*. You would then be wrong. To avoid this error be sure to observe Caution 2.

It was not necessary to go through these three steps in number 3, because of the word *you*. Caution 3 warns you not to put *effect* before a word that means a person. *You* is a person. Therefore *effect* could not be used. The word is *affect*.

Now refer to sentence 3 again and read the steps through to be sure that you understand why *affect* is correct.

4. Did his treatment ——— you immediately?

Step *a*. Did his treatment *bring about* you immediately? Silly. No sense.

*b*. Did his treatment *result* you? Silly! No sense.

*c*. Since neither meaning of *effect* applies, the required word is *affect*.

Therefore: Did his treatment *affect* you immediately?

Notice that no word is permitted to creep in between *bring* and *about*. Notice that without going through these three steps it is known that

## Pitfalls in English

the required word is *affect* because of the word *you*. (Caution 3.)

5. She has an ——ed manner.

Step *a*. She has a *bring about* manner.  
Silly! A person may have a *fetching* manner but not a *bring about* manner.

*b*. She has a *result* manner. Silly!  
She may have a manner that brings results but not a *result manner*.

*c*. The word must be *affect*.

Therefore: She has an *affected* manner.

6. The doctor is ——ing a remarkable cure.

Step *a*. The doctor is *bringing about* a remarkable cure. Fine!

Therefore: The doctor is *effecting* a remarkable cure.

7. The business depression is ——ing the confidence of the people.

Step *a*. The business depression is *bringing about* the confidence of the people.  
This sounds all right to the ear, but it is ridiculous because depression does not arouse confidence.

## How to Avoid Them

- b. The business depression is *result* the confidence of the people. No sense to that.
- c. The word must then be *affect*.

Therefore: The business depression is *affecting* the confidence of the people.

Suppose that instead of *depression* we were to use the word *prosperity*. Then, either *affect* or *effect* would be correct, depending upon what we had in mind.

*Right:* The business prosperity is *effecting* the confidence of the people. (bringing about)

*Right:* The business prosperity is *affecting* the confidence of the people. (acting upon)

### SPECIAL USES OF "EFFECT"

- 1. A person's belongings are his *effects*.
- 2. A law goes into *effect*. (operation)
- 3. Use *effect* after the word *to* and *into*. (to the effect, into effect)

Notice that we use *effect* in the sense of *bring about* in connection with only abstract things. We *effect* peace, reconciliation, harmony, a change, a revival, a satisfactory condition. (This is only

## Pitfalls in English

another way of saying Caution *c* which you will now please read.)

Once in a great while both *affect* and *effect* can be used in a sentence (see 7) at which time you must use judgment in determining what is meant.

*Effect*, you have been told, means both  
*bring about* and *result*.

*Affect* means *to act upon*, *assume a manner*, *touch emotionally*.

Do not think of *affect* as meaning *influence*. If you do you will make a mistake in the use of these two words. There is a grammatical distinction between the two italicized words in the following sentences, which, if you have no knowledge of technical grammar, will not be clear to you, and which distinction it is not necessary for you to understand if you will follow the preceding infallible device. In each of the following sentences *influence* can be used; but in one the word is *affect* and in the other, *effect*. (Please adhere to the device with its three steps.)

Did his remarks *influence* you? *affect*

The *influence* of his remarks was felt. *effect*

Did his remarks *affect* you?

The *effect* of his remarks was felt.

## How to Avoid Them

The difficulty in the application of these words originates in the fact that so many persons have been incorrectly taught that *affect* means *influence* and *effect* means *result*.

\*Affect means to influence

\*Effect (in addition to meaning *bring about*) means influence

\*Please ignore this when following the device.

A parting word: Pronounce these words distinctly so that the listener may know whether you are saying *af* or *ef*. Do not pronounce them as though they are spelled *uf*-fect. Do not say *e* (rhyming with *he*) *fect* in your effort to show that you know which you are using in your speech. Let the first syllable of *effect* (*ef*) rhyme with the letter *f*; let the first syllable of *affect* (*af*) rhyme with *taf* as in *taffy*.

### EXERCISE 10

Supply *affect* or *effect* in the following.

Consult answers on page 364, exercise 10.

1. The officer's speech did not —— the boy.
2. How did the climate —— you?
3. The —— of the climate was disastrous.
4. The ordinance went into —— yesterday.
5. The punishment ——ed a sudden change in his behavior.

## Pitfalls in English

6. The punishment ——ed him.
7. That does not —— the situation.

(Either can be used in sentence 7. Your decision will depend upon what you think the sentence means.)

DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED. THIS RULE WILL NEVER FAIL YOU. MEMORIZE IT AND APPLY IT. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE IN THE BOOK IN ITS USE TO BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN.

BE SURE TO IGNORE THE LINES MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK (\*). IT IS MUCH SAFER TO FOLLOW THE FOOLISH DEVICE.

### TO BE

Memorize the next sentence.

After *to be* (one exception), *be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*, use *I, thou, he, she, we, they*.

Read the following and decide which are correct.

1. How should you like to be *he*?
2. Should you like to be *she*?
3. How should you like to be *I*, driving an ice-wagon all day?
4. We told them that we'd like to be *they*.
5. It was *I* who rang the bell.
6. It was *we* who called at your home.
7. It was *she* who made the inquiry.

## How to Avoid Them

8. It was *they* who stole the boat.
9. It was *he* who asked me to go.
10. If you were *I*, should you do it?
11. If George had been *he*, he would have lost his temper.
12. Where are the mittens which you advertised? These are *them*.

The first eleven sentences are correct. *The twelfth is wrong.* These are *they*, is right.

Say many times aloud sentences 13-17 (*a* and *b*).

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 13a. It is <i>I</i> .    | 13b. It was <i>I</i> .    |
| 14a. It is <i>he</i> .   | 14b. It was <i>he</i> .   |
| 15a. It is <i>she</i> .  | 15b. It was <i>she</i> .  |
| 16a. It is <i>we</i> .   | 16b. It was <i>we</i> .   |
| 17a. It is <i>they</i> . | 17b. It was <i>they</i> . |

Say them so many times that the *errors* in 18-22 (*a* and *b*) will not slip from your tongue in an unguarded moment.

### *Wrong*

- \*18a. It is me.
- 19a. It is him.
- 20a. It is her.
- 21a. It is us.
- 22a. It is them.

### *Wrong*

- \*18b. It was me.
- 19b. It was him.
- 20b. It was her.
- 21b. It was us.
- 22b. It was them.

\*Some grammarians predict that *It is me* will be sanctioned sooner or later. You will do well

## Pitfalls in English

to avoid the expression. If you speak poorly and say, *It is me*, you will be classed as ignorant; if your English is excellent and you use *It is me*, only by the informed, will you be considered correct. You are safe with all classes if you say, *It is I*. The ear of the ignorant will not be offended; the educated will know that you are speaking correctly.

### EXCEPTION

After *to be* when *to be* is preceded by the name of a thing use *me, thee, him, her, us, them*.

### ILLUSTRATION

23. The teacher knew the *culprit to be me*.

Notice the expression *to be*. Preceding *to be* you will find the word *culprit*. *Culprit* is the name of a thing. Therefore after *to be* we use the word *me*, instead of *I* as in sentence 3 of this lesson. In sentence 3 the word preceding *to be* is *like*. *Like* is not the name of a thing. Hence after *to be* in sentence 3 we use *I*. After *to be* in sentences like 23 we use *me, thee, him, her, us, them*.

### EXERCISE II

Decide upon the correct word for each of the following. Consult answers, page 365, exercise 11.

## How to Avoid Them

1. He said that it was —— who did it. (me-I)
2. If you had been ——, you would have done the same thing. (they-them)
3. It was not —— who called. (she-her)
4. If I were ——, I should go. (he-him)
5. The nurse thought the patient to be——.  
(I-me)
6. The officer said that it was —— who falsified. (she-her)
7. (A knock is heard.) Who's there? It's ——.  
(we-us)
8. (Another knock.) Who's there? It's ——.  
(I-me)
9. She thought my sister to be ——.  
(I-me)
10. I thought it was to have been —— who would present the prize. (I-me)
11. (Over the telephone.) May I speak to Miss Smith? This is ——.  
(she-her)
12. It was —— who responded to the call for help. (they-them)

Remember that the exception applies only to *to be*, not to the word *be* alone, nor to *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *being*, *been*.

Before consulting the answers on page 364, put each of your answers to the following test:

Suppose that you have said in sentence 1

He said that it was *me*.

## Pitfalls in English

Transpose *me* and *it*.

He said that *me was* it.

You know that *me was* is wrong.

That shows that you should have used *I*.

He said that it was *I*.

Now transpose again.

He said that *I was* it.

*I was* is correct.

Therefore: He said that it was *I* who did it.

Suppose that in number 2 you have said

If you had been *them*.

Transpose *them* and *you*.

If *them had* been you

You know that *them had* is wrong.

That shows that you should have used *they*.

If you had been *they*

Now transpose again.

If *they had* been you

*They* had is correct.

Therefore: If you had been *they*, you would have done the same thing.

Suppose that in number 3 you have said

It was not *she* who called.

Transpose *she* and *it*.

*She was* not it.

## How to Avoid Them

*She was* is correct.

Therefore: It was not *she* who called.

Suppose that in number 4 you have said

If *I* were *him*.

Transpose *him* and *I*.

If *him* were *I*

You know that *him were* (was) is wrong.

That shows that you should have used *he*.

If *I* were *he*

Now transpose again.

If *he* were *I*

(If) *he were* is correct.

Therefore: If *I* were *he*, *I* should go.

(See page 172 for use of *were* instead of *was*, as in sentence 4.)

Suppose that in number 5 you have said

The nurse thought the patient to be *I*.

Transpose *I* and *patient*.

The nurse *thought I* to be the patient.

You know that *thought I* is wrong.

That shows that you should have used *me*.

The nurse thought the patient to be *me*.

Now transpose again.

The nurse thought *me* to be the patient.

Thought *me* is correct.

## Pitfalls in English

Therefore: The nurse thought the patient to be *me*.

The transposition of these words in sentences with *to be* always exposes the error, if there is one.

### WHICH DO YOU SAY?

I feel bad.            or    I feel badly.  
She looks bad.    or    She looks badly.

#### *Right*

1. I feel bad.
2. She feels faint.
3. He seems faint.
4. The rose smells sweet.
5. The apple tastes sweet.
6. She looks bad.
7. The medicine tastes bad.
8. He writes badly.
9. She sews poorly.
10. They sing sweetly.
11. I spoke faintly.
12. She touched it lightly.
13. He works rapidly.
14. Go slow.
15. Go slowly.
16. Go quick.
17. Go quickly.

#### *Wrong*

1. I feel badly.
2. She looks badly.
3. He works rapid.

# How to Avoid Them

## DEVICE

If you have trouble in deciding whether or not to use the *ly* form of the word, ask yourself if there is any real action expressed in the sentence. If there is action, you need *ly*; if there is not action, you do not need *ly*.

Exceptions: 14, 15, 16, 17, in which either form is correct.

## REASONING

In sentence 1, *I feel bad*, did I do any feeling? Did I use my fingers in touching, feeling anything? Is there any physical action? The answer to these three questions is *no*. Then the *ly* should be omitted.

In sentence 2, *She feels faint*, is there any action? Is she feeling anything? No. Omit *ly*.

In sentence 3, *He seems faint*, is there any action? No. Omit *ly*.

In sentence 4, *The rose smells sweet*, did the rose do any smelling? It is obvious that the rose, having no nose, cannot smell. The speaker performed the act of smelling. The rose did nothing. Omit *ly*.

In sentence 5, *The apple tastes sweet*, it is clear that the apple did nothing. The apple cannot taste. It has no tongue. Omit *ly*.

In sentence 6, *She looks bad*, she did nothing;

## Pitfalls in English

it was the speaker who did the looking. Omit *ly*.

In sentence 7, *The medicine tastes bad*, the medicine did nothing. The invalid did the tasting. Omit *ly*.

In sentences 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 the words *writes, sews, sing, spoke, touched, works*, are all action words and require the *ly* added to the words which describe how the actions were performed.

How does he write?	badly
How does she sew?	poorly
How do they sing?	sweetly
How did I speak?	faintly
How did I touch it?	lightly
How does he work?	rapidly

The automobile signs, *Drive slow* and *Go slow*, have disturbed some persons who are careful of their English, because they have not consulted the dictionary about the word *slow*.

You will find that *slow* and *slowly* may both be used to describe how an action is performed. The same is true of *quick* and *quickly* and some other words. Whenever you are in doubt, consult the dictionary. Remember that you must know how to use this remarkable book or you will draw wrong conclusions. See page 234.

## How to Avoid Them

A test that will work ninety-nine times out of a hundred is worth using.

### TEST

If *am, is, are, was, were* can be used in place of the action word which sometimes does not express action, *ly* is omitted. Observe the following note:

NOTE: Words which at first thought express action but really do not are *feels, seems, smells, tastes, looks*. These are the words to which the above test refers.

1. I feel bad, means  
I am bad (in the sense of ill).
2. She feels faint, means  
She is faint.
3. He seems faint, means  
He is faint.
4. The rose smells sweet, means  
The rose is sweet.
5. The apple tastes sweet, means  
The apple is sweet.
6. She looks bad, means  
She is bad (ill).
7. The medicine tastes bad, means  
The medicine is bad.

## Pitfalls in English

8. He writes badly, does not mean  
He is bad (ill).

Conclusion: Since *am* and *is* are applied correctly in sentence 1-7, *ly* is omitted.

Since not one of these words can be applied in sentence 8, *ly* is correct.

### WHERE MANY EDUCATED PERSONS MAKE MISTAKES

Nearly all persons use most of the *ly* words correctly. The careful speaker will use them all correctly. He needs to pay attention to the words *feel* and *look*. In this lesson he is urged to say always and forever:

I feel bad	He felt bad	She looks bad
They look bad		She feels bad

no matter how many doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs, or any other well educated persons use *ly* in these sentences, when in all other particulars they speak well. Because many university graduates make this mistake, those not so well trained must have this error pointed out to them most carefully in order that they may not be tempted to follow the incorrect example of those who are supposed to know.

# How to Avoid Them

## EXERCISE 12

Answer the following and compare your answers with those on page 365, exercise 12.

1. I felt so —— that I could have wept. (bad-badly)
2. He wrote so —— that we could not read the sheet. (bad-badly)
3. They seemed so —— that we engaged them to take care of the children. (kind-kindly)
4. How —— she looked when she was dancing! (bad-badly)
5. He spoke —— to me. (harsh-harshly)
6. Doesn't she look ——? (bad-badly)
7. The man walked ——. (rapid-rapidly)
8. The stream flows ——. (swift-swiftly)
9. The nurse acted ——. (prompt-promptly)

Advice: In cases where either form is correct, it is more pleasing to the ear to use the *ly* form when a *distinct action is expressed*.

Go *slow*. Go *slowly*. Either is right. Since *go* expresses action, *ly* is more pleasing to the ear of the cultured person.

In sentence 3 of the exercise above there is no action expressed by the word *seemed*. Where *no action is expressed* in cases where the *ly* may or may not be used, the ear is better pleased to have the *ly* omitted. We speak of *kind* persons

## Pitfalls in English

and of *kindly* persons. In this sentence either would be correct. Most persons prefer *kind*.

Do not depend upon your ear unless you have had much training in English.

### SELF-WORDS

By *self-words* is meant any word ending in *self* or *selves*.

The self-words are: *myself*, *thysself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*, *themselves*.

Many persons incorrectly use one of these words when they do not know whether to say *I* or *me*, *he* or *him*, *she* or *her*, *we* or *us*, *they* or *them*.

Illustration: The speaker wishes to say:

The man passed the cigars to John and——  
(the speaker).

He does not know whether to say to John and *I* or to John and *me*.

Thinking that the word *myself* will help him out of his difficulty he says:

The man passed the cigars to John and *myself*.  
*Myself* is incorrect.

To use *myself* in this sentence is as gross an error as the one the speaker tried to avoid—that of saying *I* for *me* or *me* for *I*. See pages 110-112 and 165-167.

# How to Avoid Them

## HOW TO USE SELF-WORDS

Self-words have two uses. They must never be put to any other use.

The two uses are:

emphatic    which means for the purpose of emphasis.

reverting    which indicates a reference to the person, animal, or thing previously spoken of.

Illustration of emphatic use:

I, *myself*, did not go; I sent Mary.

You can readily see that the sentence is more emphatic than if it were:

I did not go; I sent Mary.

Illustration of reverting use:

He cut *himself*.

(*Himself* reverts to *he*.)

Notice that the self-word always represents the same person (or persons) that is mentioned in the other part of the sentence.

1. I bumped myself. (reverting)
2. He burned himself. (reverting)
3. It lifted itself and crawled away. (reverting)

## Pitfalls in English

4. We punished ourselves by not going.  
(reverting)
5. You hurt yourselves. (reverting)
6. They ornamented themselves. (reverting)
7. I, myself, do not use slang; but I think it  
expressive. (emphatic)
8. He, himself, did it. (emphatic)
9. Be fair with yourself. (reverting)
10. Do not blame yourself. (reverting)
11. You did it yourselves. (emphatic)

In sentence 1 *I* and *myself* mean the same person.

In sentence 2 *he* and *himself* mean the same person.

In sentence 3 *it* and *itself* mean the same thing.

In sentence 4 *we* and *ourselves* mean the same persons.

In sentence 5 *you* and *yourselves* mean the same persons.

In sentence 6 *they* and *themselves* mean the same persons.

In sentence 7 *I* and *myself* mean the same person.

In sentence 8 *he* and *himself* mean the same person.

In sentence 9 the speaker is talking to *you*.  
*You* and *yourself* are the same person.

## How to Avoid Them

In sentence 10 the speaker is speaking to *you*.  
*You* and *yourself* are the same person.

In sentence 11 *you* and *yourselves* are the same person.

### *Wrong*

#### A

1. He asked John and *myself* to go.
2. *Yourself* and friends are invited.
3. How do you do? I'm well. How's *yourself*?
4. *Myself* and my friend are going.
5. *Myself* and my brother stole the money.

### *Right*

#### B

1. He asked John and *me* to go.
2. *You* and your friends are invited.
3. How do you do? I'm well. *How are you?*
4. My friend and *I* are going.
5. *I* and my brother stole the money.

In sentences like number 1, group B, if you have difficulty in deciding whether to use *I* or *me*, omit John. Think of the sentence as

He asked *me* to go.

It is easy to see that *I* cannot be used. See pages 110-112.

## Pitfalls in English

An unimportant but interesting vagary of the English language is this:

*Courtesy requires*

In sentence 4, group B, that *my friend* be mentioned first.

In sentence 5, group B, that *I mention myself first*, because I am confessing guilt.

*Avoid careless speech.*

Do not say:

*hissself* for *himself*

*ourself* for *ourselves*

*themself* for *themselves*

*theirselves* for *themselves*

*theiresself* for *themselves*

Do not put an apostrophe in any of the self-words.

**WHICH TO USE, *I* OR *ME*, *HE* OR *HIM*, *SHE*  
OR *HER*, *WE* OR *US*, *THEY* OR *THEM***

Is it difficult for you to decide whether to say:

Father bought John and *I* roller skates.

or

Father bought John and *me* roller skates.

When two or more persons are mentioned in a sentence, there is sometimes danger of using *I* for *me*, *he* for *him*, *she* for *her*, *we* for *us*, *they* for *them*.

## How to Avoid Them

If you are in doubt as to which is the correct word, take each word that means a person and use it separately in the sentence. You will then have no difficulty in deciding which is right.

Suppose that you wish to say that your father took you and your brother out for a walk. You do not know whether to say

a. Father took *he* and *I* out for a walk.

or

b. Father took *him* and *me* out for a walk.

Perhaps *a* sounds better to you than *b*. *A* is incorrect; *b* is correct.

### DEVICE

Father took *him* out for a walk.

Father took *me* out for a walk.

Therefore: Father took *him* and *me* out for a walk.

*Wrong:* Father bought John and *I* roller skates.

*Right:* Father bought John and *me* roller skates.

Reasoning: Father bought *John* roller skates.

Father bought *me* roller skates.

*Wrong:* James passed right by Paul and *I* without speaking.

*Right:* James passed right by Paul and *me* without speaking.

## Pitfalls in English

Reasoning: James passed right by *Paul* without speaking.

James passed right by *me* without speaking.

*Wrong*: Walter asked if he might take Katherine and *I* to theater.

*Right*: Walter asked if he might take Katherine and *me* to theater.

Reasoning: Walter asked if he might take *Katherine* to theater.

Walter asked if he might take *me* to theater.

*Wrong*: Come to see Tom and *I* soon.

*Right*: Come to see Tom and *me* soon.

Reasoning: Come to see *Tom* soon.

Come to see *me* soon.

Notice: Come *to* see, not Come *and* see.

*Wrong*: When do you want to see Nellie and *I* again for a rehearsal?

*Right*: When do you want to see Nellie and *me* again for a rehearsal?

Reasoning: When do you want to see *Nellie* again for a rehearsal?

When do you want to see *me* again for a rehearsal?

# How to Avoid Them

## PRINCIPAL—PRINCIPLE

Read the following eight sentences and decide which blanks require *principal* and which take *principle*. Do not consult the answers recorded below under "Device" until you have prepared this exercise.

1. The —— of the school is ill.
2. The —— reason for my absence was illness.
3. —— (money in the bank) multiplied by the rate % equals the interest.
4. The —— heirs were the son and the daughter.
5. The —— streets are Broadway and Fifth Avenue.
6. The —— ingredient of the medicine is quinine.
7. The —— character in the play dies in the last act.

Now consult the answers, pages 114 and 115. Did you find that you had some of these wrong?

*Principal* and *principle* are so easy to master that it is surprising to find them so often incorrectly used.

## DEVICE

\*1. Memorize the fact now that the *money* in the bank is the *principal*.

## Pitfalls in English

2. The rest is easy. If the word *chief* can be used instead of the word which you require (*principal* or *principle*), the word which you will supply is *principal*. *Principal* means *chief*.

Observe how this device works with the sentences at the beginning of this lesson.

Exercise explained in detail.

1. The *chief* of the school is ill.  
The *principal* of the school is ill.
2. The *chief* reason for my absence was illness.  
The *principal* reason for my absence was illness.

See \* 3. *Money in the bank* multiplied by the rate % equals the interest.  
*Principal* multiplied by the rate % equals the interest.

4. The *chief* heirs were the son and the daughter.  
The *principal* heirs were the son and the daughter.
5. The *chief* streets are Broadway and Fifth Avenue.  
The *principal* streets are Broadway and Fifth Avenue.
6. The *chief* ingredient of the medicine is quinine.

## How to Avoid Them

The *principal* ingredient of the medicine is quinine.

7. The *chief* character in the play dies in the last act.

The *principal* character in the play dies in the last act.

If *chief* cannot be used, the required word is *principle*.

8. It was not the high price to which I objected; it was the —— of profiteering that annoyed me.

Try the word *chief*.

It was not the high price to which I objected; it was the *chief* of profiteering that annoyed me.

Since *chief* cannot be used here, the required word is *principle*.

Therefore: It was not the high price to which I objected; it was the *principle* of profiteering that annoyed me.

9. He was a man of high ——.

He was a man of high *chief*. No sense to that.

The required word is *principle*.

Therefore: He was a man of high *principle*.

## Pitfalls in English

10. The machine works on the —— of expansion.

The machine works on the *chief* of expansion. No sense to that.

The required word is *principle*.

Therefore: The machine works on the *principle* of expansion.

11. I do not like his —— . This sentence might mean *chief*.

I do not like his *chief*. ( I do not like the *principal* of his school.)

The required word is *principal*.

Therefore: (a) I do not like his *principal*.

If *chief* is not meant, *principal* cannot be used.

(b) I do not like his *principle*.  
(The *principle* upon which he worked when he closed the deal. He was not strictly honest.)

In sentence 11, *a* and *b* are correct, depending upon what is meant.

Remember that *principal* has nothing to do with the fact of whether or not you are speaking or writing of a person. *Principal* person, *principal* reason, *principal* street, *principal* character, *principal* chapter, *principal* ingredient, *principal* member.

# How to Avoid Them

## EXERCISE 13

See if you are more successful this time in supplying the correct word. Answers on page 366, exercise 13.

1. Did you draw the —— from the bank?  
(See \*)
2. The —— of the school is a man of fine  
——s.
3. ——s are rules of conduct.
4. —— plus the interest equals the amount  
in the bank.
5. The —— store of the town burned.
6. The —— character in the story is an old  
soldier.
7. Did you go through the —— streets when  
you were in Detroit?
8. The —— hotel is palatial.
9. Is your —— a man or a woman?
10. We have no —— . He died. No one has  
been found of high enough —— to take  
his place.

## POINTERS

Did you ever stop to think about how you use the four words, *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*? Grammarians call them by a long and high-sounding name; but for convenience you may think of them as

## Pitfalls in English

*pointers*, because they are used to indicate or point out which articles are meant.

*This* and *that* refer to one thing.

*These* and *those* refer to more than one thing.

*This* points out one thing near by.

*That* points out one thing at a distance.

*These* points out more than one thing near by.

*Those* points out more than one thing at a distance.

*This* book is interesting but *that* one I did not enjoy.

*These* candies are delicious but *those* are not fresh.

Perhaps you are thinking that there is nothing difficult about the use of these words. You are right; there is not. How strange it is then that so few persons use them correctly. If you will listen carefully today you will hear many persons use the word *these*, which means *more than one*, with the word *kind*, which means only *one*.

### ILLUSTRATION

*Wrong:* These kind are delicious.

*Right:* These kinds are delicious.

*Right:* This kind is delicious.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* I like these kind better.

*Right:* I like these kinds better.

*Right:* I like this kind better.

*Wrong:* Do you want those kind?

*Right:* Do you want those kinds?

*Right:* Do you want that kind?

To say *these kind* or *those kind* is as incorrect as to say *these nut* or *those horse*.

NEVER SAY "THEM KINDS."

To eliminate these mistakes, originate many sentences like the following and say them over and over again until your ear becomes accustomed to the sound of *this kind* and *that kind* and receives a jolt at *these kind* and *those kind*.

1. This kind of apple is called Baldwin
2. I never did care for these kinds—Baldwins and Kings.
3. That sort of mistake is often made.
4. These sorts of pins are commonly used.
5. Those kinds are most attractive.

Notice: In sentence 1 you do not see the word *an* following *kind of*.

In sentence 3 you do not see the word *a* following *sort of*.

Do not use *a* or *an* after *kind of*, *sort of*.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* What *kind of a fountain-pen* do you use?

*Right:* What *kind of fountain-pen* do you use?

*Wrong:* Have you this *sort of a hinge*?

*Right:* Have you this *sort of hinge*?

(Foreign born persons must be careful to pronounce correctly these pointers and other words containing *th*. They should stand before a mirror to see if the tongue is visible between the teeth as the word with *th* is pronounced; *this*, not *dis*; *mother*, not *mudder*; *with*, not *wid*; *that*, not *dat*; *these*, not *dese*.)

Never say: This *here* (This *here* book is mine.)

That *there*

These *here*

Those *there*

Omit the words *here* and *there* in the above four expressions.

### ACCEPT—EXCEPT

*Accept* is correct when you can use *receive* in its place.

*Except* is correct when you can use *but*, *exclusive of* (which is the same as *but*), or *exclude* in its place.

1. All — ed the invitation.

All *received* the invitation.

Therefore: All *accepted* the invitation.

## How to Avoid Them

NOTE: *Accept* does not always really mean *receive*, but *receive* can be substituted for *accept*.

2. All —— me passed the examination. (See pages 168-172 for reason for use of *me*.)

All *but* me passed the examination.

Therefore: All *except* me passed the examination.

3. Did you —— the money?  
Did you *receive* the money?

Therefore: Did you *accept* the money?

4. If you —— this hat, I should say that the rest are bargains.

If you *exclude* this hat, I should say that the rest are bargains.

Therefore: If you *except* this hat, I should say that the rest are bargains.

5. If you will —— this from me, I shall be pleased.

If you will *receive* this from me, I shall be pleased.

Therefore: If you will *accept* this from me, I shall be pleased.

Do not say *accept of*.

*Wrong:* I *accepted of* his hospitality.

*Right:* I *accepted* his hospitality.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* I *accepted* of his attentions.

*Right:* I *accepted* his attentions.

Be sure to pronounce *accept* so that *ac* rhymes with *lack*, and *except* so that *ex* rhymes with *rex*. Care in these details is all that makes the difference between good English and poor English provided that the grammar is correct.

### EXERCISE 14

Supply *accept* or *except* in each of the following sentences. Consult answers, page 367, exercise 14.

1. I should — this one in passing favorable criticism upon the lot. It is the only one that is not satisfactory.
2. I should — this one as a gift but it is too expensive. You really cannot afford to buy it for me.
3. All of the boys — John passed a physical test.

### COMPARISON

A	B	C
One	Two	More than two
old	older, elder	oldest, eldest
young	younger	youngest
tall	taller	tallest

## How to Avoid Them

many, much	more	most
little	less	least
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
attractive	less attractive	least attractive
good, well	better	best
bad, evil, ill	worse	worst
few	fewer	fewest
far	farther, further	farthest, furthest

Use the words in column A when *merely describing* and not comparing an article with any other or others.

Use those in column B in *comparing two articles*.

Use those in column C when *comparing one article with two or more other articles*.

### RULE I

To most words of *one syllable* used for comparing, we add *er* to the word in its original form when comparing *two* articles; we add *est* to the word in its original form when comparing *one article* with *two or more other articles*.

### ILLUSTRATION:

1. Lake Erie is not a *small* lake.
2. Lake Erie is *smaller* than Lake Ontario.
3. Lake Erie is *smaller* than any other of the Great Lakes.
4. Lake Erie is the *smallest* of the Great Lakes.

# Pitfalls in English

## EXPLANATION:

In sentence 1 *small* is used merely to describe the lake.

In sentence 2 the word used to compare the two lakes is derived from a word of *one* syllable (*small*). It is used to compare *two* lakes; therefore we use *smaller*.

In sentence 3 the same word (*smaller*) is used to compare *two* lakes, Lake Erie and any other one.

In sentence 4 we are comparing *one* lake with *more than one other*; therefore we use *smallest*.

## RULE 2

Some words of *one syllable* have separate forms for use in comparing. (Study the forms for *many, little, good, bad, etc.*, in columns B and C.)

## ILLUSTRATION:

John is a *good* mechanic.

Tom is a *better* one. (Tom and John are compared.)

Tom is the *better* of the two. (This compares Tom with John.)

Bill is the *best* of all. (*Three* persons are discussed: Bill, Tom, and John.)

## RULE 3

To *some words of two syllables* we add *er* and *est* as we did in Rule 1.

## How to Avoid Them

### ILLUSTRATION:

Lake Erie is shallower than Lake Ontario. (The syllable *er* is added to *shallow* because we are comparing two lakes.)

Lake Erie is shallower than any other of the Great Lakes. (The syllable *er* is added to *shallow* because we are comparing Lake Erie with "any other" one.)

Lake Erie is the shallowest of all the Great Lakes. (The syllable *est* is added to *shallow* because we are comparing Lake Erie with all the other Great Lakes.)

### RULE 4

To *other words* of two or more than two syllables we prefix *more* and *most* or *less* and *least*.

### ILLUSTRATION:

Lake Erie is *more treacherous* than Lake Superior because it is shallow. (*More* is used because we are comparing two lakes.)

Lake Erie is *more treacherous* than any other of the Great Lakes. (*More* is used because we are comparing Lake Erie with "any other" one.)

Lake Erie is the *most treacherous* of the Great Lakes. (*Most* is used because we are comparing Lake Erie with all the other Great Lakes.)

Mary is an *attractive* girl.

Kate is *less attractive* than Mary. (comparing two)

## Pitfalls in English

Jane is the *least attractive* of the three. (comparing more than two)

If you do not know whether to use *er* and *est* or *more* and *most* or *less* and *least*, look up the word with which you expect to use these endings or prefixes in the dictionary and you will find the three correct forms. Often your ear will help you. You know that *beautifullest* does not sound well, so you say *most beautiful*. (See note about the dictionary at the end of this lesson.)

Do not use words like those in column C when you are comparing only two articles.

*Wrong:* There are two brothers both of whom I like; but I am *fondest* of the *oldest*.

*Right:* There are two brothers both of whom I like; but I am *fonder* of the *older*.

Do not use *er* or *est* when you should use respectively *more* or *most*.

*Wrong:* He is a *gracefuler* dancer than his brother.

*Right:* He is a *more graceful* dancer than his brother.

*Wrong:* This is the *interestingest* book I have ever read.

*Right:* This is the *most interesting* book I have ever read.

## How to Avoid Them

Never use double expressions like these:

*Wrong:* I am *more tireder* today than I was yesterday.

*Right:* I am *more tired* today than I was yesterday.

*Wrong:* This is the *most beautifulest* rose I have ever seen.

*Right:* This is the *most beautiful* rose I have ever seen.

Do not use expressions like *more perfect*, *more square*, *truer*, *more unique*. It is impossible for an article to be more than perfect, more than square, more than true, more than unique. Use the expressions:

*more nearly perfect*, *more nearly square*,  
*more nearly true*, and *unique*.

(Since *unique* means *only one of its kind*, it is clear that one does not say *more nearly unique*.)

*Wrong:* This small grammar is *most unique* in that it contains no technical terms.

*Right:* This small grammar is *unique* in that it contains no technical terms.

*Wrong:* These tires are *most universally* used.

*Right:* These tires are *universally* used.

# Pitfalls in English

*Important note about finding these words in your dictionary*

Suppose that you are writing a letter and you do not know just exactly what the other two forms are, for example, of the word *little*.

Looking up *little* in the dictionary, you will find printed immediately after it, *less*, *least*. That means that the three forms are *little*, *less*, *least*.

\*Looking up the word *long*, you will find no other forms. The omission of the other forms means that they follow the rule. (*longer* and *longest*)

\*Looking up *beautiful*, you will find no other forms. The omission of the other forms means that they follow the rule. (*more beautiful* or *less beautiful*, *most beautiful* or *least beautiful*)

\*The paragraphs having asterisks refer to abridged dictionaries (small desk copies).

In an unabridged dictionary (one containing every word) the three forms of all words used in comparison are given. (There are exceptions.)

If you are using either an unabridged or an abridged dictionary you will find in the fore part of it a full explanation of the lexicographer's plan to save room by omitting certain forms in the body of the dictionary and still give you the facts you need. Be sure to read the fore part.

# How to Avoid Them

## TROUBLESOME COMBINATIONS

family is,      family are,      committee is,  
                 committee are, etc.

To decide whether to use *is* or *are*, *was* or *were*, *has* or *have*, in certain connections (like the above) is often difficult.

It is well to consider what idea one is trying to convey before making the decision; *e.g.*, it is obvious that it is not possible for one person to quarrel, argue, discuss, etc. Therefore say:

1. The family *are* quarreling.
2. The committee *are* discussing the question.
3. The board *disagree*.
4. The class *have* not *come* to an agreement.

If these four sentences are disturbing to the ear, there is the alternative of saying:

1. The members of the family are quarreling.
2. The various members of the committee are discussing the question.
3. The individuals of the board disagree.
4. The pupils of the class have not come to an agreement.

To say, "The family *has* moved to New York," is correct.

## Pitfalls in English

To say, "The family *have* moved to New York," is correct.

Suppose you were going to say nothing more about the family than the fact of the removal to New York. *Has moved* would then not be objectionable. But suppose you wished to say, "They are boarding with friends." It would then be better to say *have moved* in the first sentence. Otherwise to be consistent you would have

The family *has* moved to New York.

*Wrong:* It is boarding with friends.

The family *have* moved to New York.

*Right:* They are boarding with friends.

When in doubt as to what word to use with words like *family*, *board*, *committee*, etc., the safe way is to use the form meaning more than one because the speaker may always present the argument that he was thinking of the individuals of the family, the board, the committee, etc.

These are correct:

1. The family (as a whole) lives next door.
2. The family *are* arguing over the will. (One cannot argue.)
3. The committee *is* in session.

## How to Avoid Them

4. The committee *are* now discussing the matter. (One cannot discuss.)
5. The board (as a whole) *is* pleased with the service.
6. The board *are* quarreling over the money. (One cannot quarrel.)
7. The session *are* in conference. (One cannot confer.)

## DANGER!

Sentences that begin with *there*, *here*, *over there*, *over here*, and similar expressions

When you begin a sentence with any one of the above expressions be careful of the words which follow. If you are not sure that your sentence is correct, transpose the parts to discover your error.

*Wrong:*            There comes the boys.

*Transposition:* The boys comes. (wrong)

*Error corrected: The boys come.*

Therefore: There *come* the boys.

*Wrong:*            Here comes father and mother  
                        now.

*Transposition:* Father and mother comes.  
(wrong)

*Error corrected: Father and mother come.*

# Pitfalls in English

Therefore: Here *come* father and mother now.

*Wrong:*            There *sits* John and Mary way  
                             up on the hill.

*Transposition:* John and Mary *sits*. (wrong)

*Error corrected: John and Mary sit.*

Therefore: There *sit* John and Mary way up  
on the hill.

*Wrong:*            There *was* three of us at the  
                                 dinner.

*Transposition:* Three of us *was* at the dinner.  
(wrong)

*Error corrected:* Three of us *were* at the dinner.

Therefore: There *were* three of us at the dinner.

*Wrong:*            *There's been three agents at the door this morning.*

*Transposition:* Three agents *has been* at the door this morning.

*Error corrected:* Three agents *have been* at the door this morning.

Therefore: There *have been* three agents at the door this morning.

*Wrong:            There's a man and a woman sitting on the steps.*

*Transposition:* A man and a woman is sitting.  
(wrong)

## How to Avoid Them

*Error corrected:* A man and a woman *are* sitting on the steps.

Therefore: There *are* a man and a woman sitting on the steps.

*Wrong:*                *Here's* your books.

*Transposition:* Your books *is*. (wrong)

*Error corrected:* Your books *are*.

Therefore: Here *are* your books.

*Wrong:*                *Here's* two letters for you.

*Transposition:* Two letters *is* here. (wrong)

*Error corrected:* Two letters *are* here.

Therefore: Here *are* two letters for you.

*Wrong:*                There *has* been both trouble and expense put into this piece of work.

*Transposition:* Both trouble and expense *has been put* into this piece of work. (wrong)

*Error corrected:* Both trouble and expense *have been put* into this piece of work.

Therefore: There *have been* both trouble and expense put into this piece of work.

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:*                There *goes* the boys.

*Transposition:*    The boys *goes*.    (wrong) .

*Error corrected:*    The boys *go*.

Therefore: There *go* the boys.

### SHALL—WILL

The correct use of *shall* and *will* is more often ignored than that of any other word in the English language. Many other words are used incorrectly by the illiterate but *shall* and *will* seem to be slighted by literate and illiterate alike.

If you say—I *will* certainly catch cold in this draught—you appear ridiculous because *will* used with *I* in this sentence means that you are determined to catch cold. Did you ever set your heart upon catching cold? You should have said,—I *shall* certainly catch cold in this draught.

### EXPLANATION OF TERMS

*Shall* and *will* are used to express actions which are to occur in the future.

Future is a term referring to that which has not yet happened.

There are two kinds of future: simple and involved.

Simple future is future which does not express determination, threat, promise.

## How to Avoid Them

Involved future is future which expresses determination, threat, promise.

(Do not think that you are being plunged into technical English. The terms used on this page have the same meaning in this book that they have in ordinary conversation.)

We use both *shall* and *will* in expressing simple future.

We use both *shall* and *will* in expressing involved future.

When *shall* is correct in expressing simple future, *will* is correct in involved future.

When *will* is correct in expressing simple future, *shall* is correct in involved future.

### ILLUSTRATION:

I *shall* go to New York next week.

That is simple future. I am not promising. I am expressing mere intention to go. I may change my mind.

I *will* go to New York next week.

That is determination. It is also a promise.

### DEDUCTION:

Using *shall* with *I* indicates simple future.

Using *will* with *I* indicates determination, threat, promise.

The boys (or they) *will* enter college next fall.  
(simple future)

## Pitfalls in English

The boys (or they) *shall* enter college next fall. (determination on the part of the parents)

You *will* undoubtedly study law. (simple future)

You *shall* study law. (determination)

The children (they) *will* not go to school tomorrow. (simple future)

The children (they) *shall* not go to school tomorrow. (determination)

\*Mr. Jones (he) *will* pay the bill tomorrow. (simple future)

\*\* Mr. Jones (he) *shall* pay the bill tomorrow. (determination or promise)

\**Mr. Jones will pay the bill tomorrow* is probably the remark of his bookkeeper to a person whom Mr. Jones owes. She is merely stating the fact that she thinks that he will pay. It is not a promise.

\*\**Mr. Jones shall pay the bill tomorrow* means that the person making the remark knows that Mr. Jones intends to pay and will do so; and besides this element of promise, it may have an element of determination, showing that the speaker will see that Mr. Jones does pay.

### SHALL—WILL IN A STATEMENT

NOTE: A statement is a sentence that tells a fact. We get wool from sheep.

# How to Avoid Them

A question is a sentence that asks information. Do we get wool from sheep?

## TABULATION

### SIMPLE FUTURE

One Group 1	More than one Group 2
a. I <i>shall</i> go.	We <i>shall</i> go.
b. Thou <i>wilt</i> go.	You <i>will</i> go.
c. He <i>will</i> go. }	They <i>will</i> go.
d. She <i>will</i> go. }	
e. It <i>will</i> go. }	

### INVOLVED FUTURE

*Determination, Threat, Promise*

One Group 3	More than one Group 4
a. I <i>will</i> go.	We <i>will</i> go.
b. Thou <i>shalt</i> go.	You <i>shall</i> go.
c. He <i>shall</i> go. }	They <i>shall</i> go.
d. She <i>shall</i> go. }	
e. It <i>shall</i> go. }	

Notice that line *a*, group 1, and line *a*, group 2, employ the same word—*shall*.

Notice that all the other lines in these groups employ—*will*.

## Pitfalls in English

Notice that line *a*, group 3, and line *a*, group 4, employ the same word—*will*.

Notice that all the other lines in these groups employ—*shall*.

Notice that line *a*, groups 1 and 2, employs—*shall*.

Notice that line *a*, groups 3 and 4, employs—*will*.

Notice that all other lines, groups 1 and 2, employ—*will*.

Notice that all other lines, groups 3 and 4, employ—*shall*.

### DEVICE

If you thoroughly master line *a* in groups 1 and 2 you will be able to deduce the other lines because they are the exact converse. This makes the information about *shall* and *will* in a statement easy to remember.

The following illustrate all the uses of *shall* and *will* in a statement. See if you understand why *shall* or *will* is used in each. If you do not, refer to the tabulation.

### Simple future

(future which does not express *determination*,  
*threat*, *promise*)

## How to Avoid Them

I *shall* soon go to New York.      We *shall* soon go to New York.

Thou *wilt* soon go to New York.      You *will* soon go to New York.

He *will* soon go to New York.

She *will* soon go to New York.

It *will* soon go to New York.

They *will* soon go to New York.

### Involved future

#### *Determination*

I *will* go whether you approve or not.

We *will* go; we are determined.

Thou *shalt* go; I insist.

You *shall* go; I insist.

He *shall* go to school; the law compels him to do so.

She *shall* go for the same reason.

They *shall* go even if I have to borrow the money.

It *shall* go whether you go or not.

#### *Threat*

I *will* sue you if you do not pay the rent.

We *will* sue you if you do not pay.

Thou *shalt* suffer if thou deceivest me.

You *shall* suffer if you are dishonest.

## Pitfalls in English

He <i>shall</i> move if he does not pay the rent.	} They <i>shall</i> move if they do not pay.
She <i>shall</i> move if she does not pay the rent.	
It <i>shall</i> go out of the house unless you obey.	

### *Promise*

I <i>will</i> present you with a book.	We <i>will</i> present candy to each child.
Thou <i>shalt</i> reward thy friend.	You <i>shall</i> take a pres- ent to him.
He <i>shall</i> help you to- morrow.	} They <i>shall</i> go with us to your home.
She <i>shall</i> carry your package.	
It <i>shall</i> be done for you.	

Notice that the groups under *determination*, *threat*, and *promise* are alike in their uses of *shall* and *will*.

Notice that the groups under *determination*, *threat*, and *promise* are the converse of the group under *simple future*.

## SHALL—WILL IN QUESTIONS

In introducing the rule for *shall* and *will* in questions, most grammars say: "In a question

## How to Avoid Them

use *shall* or *will* according as it is used in the reply." That statement is not of enough assistance to the student. The following explains thoroughly the line of thought, and clearly shows that the questioner must quickly think out the answer first.

This is an amusing feature of the rule for *shall* and *will*. It will make you think of a game of cards provided that you play cards. Suppose that your opponent leads a spade to you. You are expected to return a spade to him. It is the same in the game of *shall* and *will* in questions. If the one who asks the question leads *shall*, the one who replies should return *shall* in the answer—that is if he uses either of the two words in the answer. If the one who asks the question uses *will*, the one who answers will return *will* in the reply. Now watch!

1. *Shall* you soon return to New York? I *shall*.
2. *Shall* you graduate this year? I *shall* try to do so.
3. *Shall* he report for work Monday? He *shall*.  
(determination)
4. *Shall* she go now? Yes; she *shall*. (determination)
5. *Will* you help me? I *will*.
6. *Will* you lend me your pencil? I *will* not, because I need it for my work.

## Pitfalls in English

Carefully follow the reasoning below for the preceding expressions before trying to supply *shall* and *will* in the exercise at the end of this lesson.

### REASONING

Remember that the one asking the question must first decide what the reply will be. The reply to sentence 1 will be either *I shall* or *I shall not* because a promise is not required. The person asking the question simply asked what is the other's intention. The answer requires the word *shall*; then the question will contain the word *shall*.

In sentence 2 a promise is not demanded. No one ever promises to graduate. The most he can do is try hard to graduate; but he may fail at the last moment. A promise would be *I will*. This answer will not be a promise; therefore the answer will be *I shall*. The question will then be *Shall you?*

Sentence 3 can best be explained by supposing that there are three persons involved: a prospective employer, a mother, and her son. The employer has agreed to employ the son. The mother wishes to know whether the boy is to begin work the following Monday. The employer obviously is the one to decide and his answer is in the nature of a determination. The employer's answer will begin with the word *he*.

## How to Avoid Them

To express determination with the word *he*, use *shall*. Therefore the question will be *Shall he report for work Monday?*

(Sentence 3 again) Suppose that I, a fourth person, a friend of the mother, am talking to the mother. In the course of conversation she tells me that her son has found a position. I, wishing to know how soon her son will begin his new work, ask, "Will he report for work soon?" The answer now will not be a promise to me; it will express merely the boy's intention. The answer (thought out first and very quickly, remember) will be, *He will*. The question then will have to contain *will*. *Will he report for work Monday?*

The reasoning for number 3 applies to number 4 (involved future).

Numbers 5 and 6 are questions requiring promises in the replies. Each reply begins with *I*. With *I* in a promise we use *will*. Therefore *will* is used in both of these questions.

Here is an easy way to decide between the use of *shall* or *will* in a question.

If the answer is to express determination, threat, promise, with *I* and *we* required in the answer, use *will* in the question.

If the answer is *not* to express determination, threat, promise, with *I* and *we* in the answer, use *shall* in the question.

# Pitfalls in English

If the answer is to express determination, threat, promise, with *thou, he, she, it, you, they* in the answer, use *shall* in the question.

If the answer is *not* to express determination, threat, promise, with *thou, he, she, you, they* in the answer, use *will* in the question.

NOTE: Do not think that *shall* or *will* must always appear in the answer to a question containing *shall* or *will*; but if *shall* or *will* is contained in the answer, it should be correctly used. If the person asking the question uses the wrong word (*will* for *shall* or *shall* for *will*), the one replying may, if he knows how, use the correct word. His correct use will not be noticed by the questioner; hence he will not be considered rude.

The greatest number of mistakes in the use of *shall* and *will* is made in sentences like the following:

## *Wrong*

### A

1. I will need an umbrella.
2. Will I go to lunch now, Mr. Billings?
3. Will you go to Europe next summer?
4. We will certainly take cold here.
5. We will miss the train.
6. I will be too warm in these clothes.

# How to Avoid Them

## Right

### B

1. I *shall* need an umbrella.
2. *Shall* I go to lunch now, Mr. Billings?
3. *Shall* you go to Europe next summer?
4. We *shall* certainly take cold here.
5. We *shall* miss the train.
6. I *shall* be too warm in these clothes.

Sentence 1, group A, is wrong because *I will* expresses determination. Is there any one who is determined to need an umbrella?

Sentence 2, group A, is wrong. It is *never* correct to say *Will I*.

Sentence 3, group A, is wrong, because *Will you* would require *I will* in the answer. *I will* expresses a promise and you are not expecting the person to whom you are speaking to give you a promise that he will go.

Sentence 4, group A, is wrong because *We will* means that we are determined to take cold; no one is anxious to do that.

Sentence 5, group A, is wrong because *We will* means that we are determined to miss the train. Most of us wish to catch the train.

Sentence 6, group A, is wrong because *I will* means that I am determined to be too warm.

# Pitfalls in English

## EXERCISE 15

Supply *shall* or *will* in each of the following.  
Consult answers on page 367, exercise 15.

1. —— you go swimming this morning?
2. —— you travel all next year?
3. —— you please teach me how to knit?
4. —— you help me to clean house?
5. —— I do it this way?
6. —— he go on duty at once?
7. —— Kate do your marketing for you?
8. —— Kate do your marketing for you? I'll  
gladly lend her to you.
9. —— we assist you?
10. —— my son call for you?
11. —— we go now?
12. We —— drown, I fear, because there is no  
one in sight to assist us.
13. He —— obey you; I —— see to that.
14. They —— call tomorrow; I promise you  
that.
15. —— I telephone to you about it?
16. John and I (we) —— assist you.
17. May (she) —— soon leave the city.
18. Thou —— not steal.
19. You —— not go.
20. I —— call on him tomorrow if you wish.

## How to Avoid Them

### CONTRACTIONS OF *SHALL NOT* AND *WILL NOT*

I'll	means	I shall or will
he'll	means	he shall or will
she'll	means	she shall or will
it'll	means	it shall or will
we'll	means	we shall or will
you'll	means	you shall or will
they'll	means	they shall or will

Remember that it is inelegant to use contractions in any but familiar speech or writing. See page 342.

### SHOULD—WOULD

All grammars inform you that *should* and *would* follow the rules for *shall* and *will*. This book goes more deeply into the matter showing you how to apply the rule for *shall* and *will* when deciding whether to use *should* or *would*.

### TO REVIEW *SHALL* AND *WILL* IS HELPFUL

Suppose that I wish to say that if I am invited to the wedding I *shall* go. I have framed the sentence so that perhaps I am obliged to use either *should* or *would* and I must think which is correct. I reason it out in terms of *shall* and *will*.

## Pitfalls in English

a. I *shall* go if I am invited. (I am not promising.)

b. If I were in your place and invited to the wedding, I think I *should* go.

In b *should* is used because in a *shall* is used.

c. Perhaps you *will* go if you are invited.

d. I suppose you *would* go if you were invited.

In d *would* is used because in c *will* is used.

e. He *will* probably go if he receives an invitation.

f. He *would* probably go if he received an invitation.

In f *would* is used because in e *will* is used.

g. She *will* go if she is invited.

h. She *would* go if she were invited.

In h *would* is used because in g *will* is used.

i. The clock (it) *will* stop if you do not wind it.

j. The clock (it) *would* stop if it were not wound.

In j *would* is used because in i *will* is used.

k. I *will* not do it. (determination)

l. I *would* (say it emphatically) not do it.

In l *would* is used because in k *will* is used.

## How to Avoid Them

Group A does not express determination

GROUP A	{	I <i>should</i>	We <i>should</i>
		thou <i>wouldst</i>	You <i>would</i>
		he <i>would</i>	They <i>would</i>
		she <i>would</i>	
		it <i>would</i>	

Group B expresses determination

GROUP B	{	I <i>would</i>	We <i>would</i>
		Thou <i>shouldst</i>	You <i>should</i>
		he <i>should</i>	They <i>should</i>
		she <i>should</i>	
		it <i>should</i>	

Do not interpret *should* to mean *ought to*.

*Should*, meaning *ought to*, will be found farther along in the lesson.

## SHOULD AND WOULD IN QUESTIONS

Use *should* and *would* in questions according as you expect *should* and *would* in the replies. Figure this out from *shall* and *will*.

### ILLUSTRATION

— you like to have a party next Wednesday? (should-would)

First try the rule for *shall* and *will* in questions.

If the answer implies *shall*, *shall* appears in the question.

## Pitfalls in English

If the answer implies *will*, *will* appears in the question.

The answer to this question will begin with *I*.

*I shall* like to have a party next Wednesday.

Therefore the answer with *should* or *would* should be

*I should* like to have a party next Wednesday.

Therefore: *Should* you like to have a party next Wednesday?

This all sounds very complicated but thought is quicker than speech, and you will find after a little effort that you can decide upon the correct word with no difficulty. The feeling of satisfaction which will result is truly worth the effort.

The following are correct:

1. How *should* you like to be a doctor? (*I should* like)
2. *I should* like to be a minister better than to be a doctor.
3. How *would* he enjoy going to the theater? (*He would* enjoy)
4. *He would* enjoy it very much.
5. *Should* you care to take this position?
6. *I should* not; in fact *I just would* not. *I am* determined about that.
7. *Should* you like to go to Boston with me? (*I should* like)

## How to Avoid Them

- \*8. He *should* not do that. (*ought* not)  
9. She *shouldn't* do that; I'll see that she stops it at once. (determination)  
10. I *would* not go. (determination)

The greatest number of mistakes is made in sentences like the following:

11. How *should* you like to go to New York?  
(Many persons say *would*.)

*Should* is correct because the answer is to be *I should like*.

We say *I shall like going* or *I shall enjoy going*. Remember to think out the use of *should* and *would* through the rules for *shall* and *will*. Sentence 11 is a question. The answer will begin with *I*. Therefore: *I should like*

Therefore: How *should* you like to go to New York?

\**Should* in the sense of *ought to* is correct with *I, thou, he, she, it, we, you, they*.

*I should go.*

*Thou shouldst go.*

*He should go.*

*She should go.*

*It should go.*

*We should go.*

*You should go.*

*They should go.*

*Would* in the sense of *custom* or *habit* is correct with *I, thou, he, she, it, we, you, they*.

## Pitfalls in English

When I was young I *would* often go swimming.

When thou wast young thou *wouldst* often go swimming.

When he was young he *would* often go swimming.

When she was young she *would* often go swimming.

When it was young it *would* bloom daily.

When we were young we *would* often go swimming.

When you were young you *would* often go swimming.

When they were young they *would* often go swimming.

### MAY—CAN

These little words correctly used add tone to one's speech. The difference between them is so simple to understand that there is no excuse for using them incorrectly.

*May* implies permission and possibility.

*Can* implies ability to do.

## How to Avoid Them

### *Right*

1. John, *may* I go with you?
2. Mrs. Smith, *may* Mary go with me to school?
3. Uncle John, *may* I borrow your pencil?
4. I *may* go if it does not rain.
5. It *may* rain by tonight.
6. The lawyer *may* refuse to take the case.

In sentences 1-3 permission is sought. *Can* would have been incorrect.

In sentences 4-6 possibility is implied.

### CAN I?

One seldom has occasion to use *can* with *I* or *we* in a question. How can anybody tell you, the reader of this lesson, what you *can* do (what you have the ability to do)? Let us suppose that you say, "*Can* I open the window?" The one whom you ask does not know whether at that particular moment you have or have not the strength to open it; he cannot tell you whether you can or cannot. For the same reason

### It is Wrong to Say

7. *Can* I close the door?
8. *Can* I come to see you?

## Pitfalls in English

9. *Can* I sing for you?  
10. I *can* go with you (meaning I have permission to go).

*May* should have been used in sentences 7–10 in order to express permission.

From the facts about *may* and *can* in the preceding section, you will see the reason for the reply of the mother in the following conversation:

*Daughter:* Mother, *can* I swim today?

*Mother:* Yes, you *can*; but you *may* not. It is Sunday.

If *may* or *can* is to appear in the reply, the reply will contain whichever word (*may* or *can*) was used in the question (provided the questioner has used care).

*Question:* *May* I go?

*Answer:* You *may*.

*Question:* *Can* the baby walk yet?

*Answer:* Yes, he takes a few steps. He *can* walk.

Do not think that the word *may* or *can* must always appear in the reply. Just *Yes* or *No*; *I think so*; *I think not*; *No, not yet*; and other answers may be used.

When you see the mark “sterling” on silver, you know that it is of the finest quality.

## How to Avoid Them

Such distinguishing marks there are in your speech either to call attention to your good English or to expose the points in which you are weak.

### IDIOSYNCRASIES

The following are worth consideration:

Use *as* twice in making an affirmative comparison.

*Wrong:* I am just *so* tired *as* I can be.

*Right:* I am just *as* tired *as* I can be.

Use *so* once and *as* once in making a negative comparison.

*Wrong:* You are not *as* tall *as* he. (*Not* is the sign of the negative.)

*Right:* You are *not so* tall *as* he.

When you use *not only* follow it by *but also* or *also*; not by *but*.

*Wrong:* He is *not only* an artist; *but* he is a writer.

*Right:* He is *not only* an artist; *but he is also* a writer.

*Right:* He is *not only* an artist; *but also* he is a writer.

*Right:* He is *not only* an artist; he is *also* a writer.

## Pitfalls in English

The reason for not using *but* without *also* in the preceding sentences is interesting. You know that the word *but* always conveys a sort of negative, disparaging, or contradictory idea.

Suppose you say: Mary is an attractive girl, but—

The listener knows at once that you are going to reduce this compliment in some way—perhaps by saying that her teeth are poor or her hair is not a good color; but when you add the word *also*, you are immediately adding to the force of your previous section of sentence, even if the previous section is uncomplimentary.

*Complimentary:* Mary is an attractive girl, *but* she is *also* very intelligent.

*Better:* Mary is *not only* an attractive girl, *but* she is *also* very intelligent.

*Uncomplimentary:* Mary is *not only* unattractive, *but* she is *also* dull.

Mary is unattractive in appearance, *but* she has a pleasing manner.

Notice in the last sentence the way in which *but* without *also* detracts from the force of Mary's unattractiveness, instead of adding to it. In other words, *but* without *also* introduces an ex-

## How to Avoid Them

pression contradictory to the previous expression.

### AS—LIKE

The use of *like* for *as*, *as if*, *as though*, is very common in some parts of the United States. It is a serious error.

*Wrong:* Do like I do.

*Right:* Do as I do.

*Wrong:* I feel like I have been drawn through a knot-hole.

*Right:* I feel as though I have been drawn through a knot-hole.

*Wrong:* He feels like he ought to have more pay.

*Right:* He feels as though he ought to have more pay.

*Wrong:* It looks like it would rain.

*Right:* It looks as though it would rain.

*Wrong:* It looks like John will get the position.

*Right:* It looks as though John will get the position.

The following show the correct use of *like*:

1. She looks like me. (resembles)
2. It smells like a rose. (resembles)
3. It tastes like vinegar. (resembles)
4. Doesn't that sound like her? (resemble)

## Pitfalls in English

The following show the correct use of *as*:

1. I feel *as* he does about the matter.
2. He tasted the wine *as* you did—on the sly.
3. It sounds *as* though you are angry.
4. She looks *as* he did before he left this climate—pale.
5. I do *as* I please in my own home.

### OBSERVE:

*As* is often followed by a complete statement.

*As* is often followed by *I, he, she, it, we, you, they*.

*Like* is never followed by a *complete statement*.

*Like* is never followed by *I, he, she, we, they*.

*Like* is often followed by *me, him, her, it, us, you, them*.

## TWO NEGATIVES

Use care in including the following words in your conversation:

*no, not, none, hardly, only, and but.*

Two negatives make an affirmative. If you say: I have *not no* time, you are saying that you have *some* time.

*Wrong:* I ain't got no time.

*Wrong:* I haven't got no time.

*Wrong:* I haven't no time.

## How to Avoid Them

*Right:* I haven't any time.

*Right:* I have no time.

*Wrong:* I haven't none.

*Right:* I have none.

*Wrong:* I couldn't hardly manage the horse.

*Right:* I could hardly manage the horse.

*Wrong:* I won't keep you but a minute.

*Right:* I will keep you but a minute.

*Wrong:* I didn't have only five cents.

*Right:* I had only five cents.

### LEARN—TEACH

The person who imparts the knowledge *teaches* the one who obtains the knowledge.

The teacher *teaches*. The pupil *learns*.

Present	Past	Ing form	With <i>has,</i> <i>have, had</i>
teach	taught	teaching	taught
learn	learned	learning	learned

*Wrong:* She *learned* me how to knit.

*Right:* She *taught* me how to knit.

*Right:* { Miss Sutherland *teaches* in Lincoln School.  
She *taught* there when I was a child.  
She is *teaching* there now.  
She has *taught* many years.

# Pitfalls in English

*Right:* { I *learn* a poem every week.  
I *learned* "The Builders" last week.  
This week I *am learning* "The Psalm of Life."  
I *have learned* twenty poems this term.

## OFF

Do not say *off of*.

Omit *of*.

*Wrong:* { He jumped *off of* the horse.  
I got *off of* the car at Madison Avenue.  
The man fell *off of* the roof.  
He took the book *off of* the desk without permission.

*Right:* { He jumped *off* the horse.  
I got *off* the car at Madison Avenue.  
The man fell *off* the roof.  
He took the book *off* the desk without permission.

## INDISCRIMINATE USE OF *IT*

These are correct:

It is raining.      It is snowing.      It is pleasant.

These are incorrect:

1. *It says* in the paper that it will rain.

## How to Avoid Them

2. In the notice *it says* that the games will begin at four o'clock.
3. Does *it say* Broadway on that car?

These are correct:

1. The paper states that it will rain.
2. The notice states that the games will begin at four o'clock.
3. Is that car marked Broadway?

### EXPRESSIONS LIKE *AS WELL AS*, *TOGETHER WITH*, *IN ADDITION TO*

Such expressions as: *as well as*, *together with*, *with*, *in addition to*, *including*, *no less than*, do not affect the rest of the words in the sentence.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

1. The girl *was* walking in the park.  
(one person)
2. The girl with her mother *was* walking in the park.  
(two persons—but we do not use *were*.  
The sentence might read, The girl was walking in the park with her mother.)
3. The husband *is* ill.  
(one person)

## Pitfalls in English

4. The husband as well as the wife is ill.  
(two persons). The husband *is* ill as well as the wife.
5. The man *was* discharged.  
(one person)
6. The man together with his assistants *was* discharged.  
The man was discharged (together with his assistants).

### UNIFORMITY THROUGH THE SENTENCE

Remember that each of the following: each one, every one, everybody, anybody, a person, a man, a pupil, etc., means only one person. When using these words, care must be exercised to be consistent throughout the sentence.

- A *Wrong*: If each one will come to the desk, *they* may have a coupon.
- B *Right*: If each one will come to the desk, *he* (or *she*) may have a coupon.

In sentence A *each one* means one person; therefore *they*, which means more than one, is wrong. Sentence B shows the correct word to use.

- A *Wrong*: Everyone will please remove *their* hat.
- B *Right*: Everyone will please remove *her* (or *his*) hat.

## How to Avoid Them

In sentence A *everyone* is regarded as meaning every separate and individual person. Therefore *they*, which means more than one, is wrong. Sentence B shows the correct word to use.

A *Wrong*: *Everybody* brought *their* children with *them*.

B *Right*: *Everybody* brought *his* (or *her*) children with *him* (or *her*).

In sentence A *everybody* is regarded as meaning every one, every individual one. *Their* and *them* mean more than one. Therefore *their* and *them* are incorrectly used. Sentence B shows the correct words to use.

A *Wrong*: If anyone has lost a pencil, *they* will find it on the table.

B *Right*: If anyone has lost a pencil, *he* will find it on the table.

A *Wrong*: If anybody wishes a pen, *they* may ask for it.

B *Right*: If anybody wishes a pen, *he* may ask for it.

A *Wrong*: If a person speaks correctly, *they* make a good impression.

B *Right*: If a person speaks correctly, *he* makes a good impression.

A *Wrong*: If a man wants a position, *they* ought to let the fact be known.

## Pitfalls in English

B *Right*: If a man wants a position, *he* ought to let the fact be known.

A *Wrong*: If a person wants to be a secretary, *they* ought to have a knowledge of business.

B *Right*: If a person wants to be a secretary, *she* ought to have a knowledge of business.

A *Wrong*: If a pupil comes late, *they* are punished.

B *Right*: If a pupil comes late, *he* is punished.

A *Wrong*: Each may have *their* gift now.

B *Right*: Each may have *his* gift now.

When you do not know the sex of the person or persons about whom you are talking, you may use the words *he* and *him*, regardless of sex, if you wish; or you may say *he or she* and *him or her*. If you know the sex, you use the word required.

### ILLUSTRATION:

*Wrong*: If a person comes late to the meeting, the superintendent speaks sharply to *them*.

If at the meeting there are persons of both sexes, you may use the word *him* alone or *him or her*. If all are men, use *him*; if all are women, use *her*.

## How to Avoid Them

*Right:* If a person comes late to the meeting,  
the superintendent speaks sharply to  
*him.* (or *him or her*)

*Right:* If a person comes late to the meeting,  
the superintendent speaks sharply to  
*her.*

### WHICH DO YOU SAY?

- GROUP 1 {
1. John divided the candy *between*  
him and I.  
or
  2. John divided the candy *between*  
him and me.  
or
  3. John divided the candy *between*  
he and I.  
or
  4. John divided the candy *between*  
him and myself.

- GROUP 2 {
1. The doctor asked the favor *of* my  
friend and I.  
or
  2. The doctor asked the favor *of* my  
friend and me.  
or
  3. The doctor asked the favor *of* my  
friend and myself.

## Pitfalls in English

- GROUP 3 {
1. They didn't receive the telegram *from* Harry and I until yesterday.
  2. They didn't receive the telegram *from* Harry and me until yesterday.

- GROUP 4 {
1. My brother sat in front *of* George and I at the theater.
  2. My brother sat in front *of* George and me at the theater.

- GROUP 5 {
1. My sister sat *behind* Tom and myself at the concert.
  2. My sister sat *behind* Tom and me at the concert.

- GROUP 6 {
1. Should you like to go *with* George and I?
  2. Should you like to go *with* George and me?

- GROUP 7 {
1. They sent the papers *to* John and I last week.
  2. They sent the papers *to* John and me last week.

## How to Avoid Them

In each of the seven groups of sentences the second one is correct.

### DEVICE

Notice the italicized words. They are first cousins to the word *to*. After these first cousins you use the same word that you would use after *to*. You do not say: *to I*, *to he*, *to she*, *to we*, *to they*. You say: *to me*, *to him*, *to her*, *to us*, *to them*.

### These are Correct

- GROUP 8 {
1. She sat *between him* and *me*.  
(*to him*, *to me*)
  2. Pass the candy *to Tom* and *me*,  
please. (*to me*)
  3. You passed right *by mother* and  
*me* without speaking. (*to me*)

A suggestion: In sentences like 2 and 3 in Group 8, it is a simple matter to decide which word is required. Just omit the other person or persons mentioned. Illustration—

In sentence 2 omit *Tom*. You would say, Pass the candy *to me*.

In sentence 3 omit *mother*. You would say, You passed right *by me*.

Many persons seem afraid to use the word *me*. Why? If the word were not to be used, there

# Pitfalls in English

would be no such word. There is a time when its use indicates ignorance: *Me* and *him* went—should be—*He* and *I* went. There is a time when its use indicates education: All except *me* went. (Except is first cousin to *to*. To *me*)

## Which Does Your Speech Indicate?

Let your dictionary help you with these words. When you are in doubt as to the word to use after them, look them up in the dictionary and if they are marked *prep.* (preposition), remember that they will take the word after them that *to* requires.

## WHAT TO USE AFTER “BUT” AND “EXCEPT”

Which sentences in the following are correct?

1. All but *me* went to the party.

or

2. All but *I* went to the party.

3. All went but *I*.

or

4. All went but *me*.

## How to Avoid Them

5. All except *me* went.

or

6. All except *I* went.

7. All went except *me*.

or

8. All went except *I*.

Before reading the next paragraph be sure that you have decided upon the correct sentences. If you have chosen correctly, you may be pleased. Few understand this point.

Numbers 1, 4, 5, 7 are right.

Did you choose correctly?

The arguer will say, "It can't be right to say, 'Me went.'" (Sentences 1 and 5)

A glance, however, will show the argumentative that the person represented by the word *me* is the only one who stayed at home. It is not *Me* went; but *All* went (except *me*).

Your problem: How are you to know whether to use *I* or *me*, *we* or *us*, *he* or *him*, *she* or *her*, *they* or *them*.

### DEVICE

If *but* can be substituted for *except* and *except* can be substituted for *but*, the word which fol-

# Pitfalls in English

lows *but* or *except* is the word that would follow the word *to*.

We say: to *me*, to *thee* (Biblical or poetic style), to *him*, to *her*, to *us*, to *them*.

Memorize *me, thee, him, her, us, them*. Remember to use any one of these words when *but* means *except* and when *except* means *but*.

## OPERATION

1. All the children except —— can play the piano. (she-her)

## LINE OF THOUGHT

The first thing to find out is this: Does *except* mean *but*?

Do not bother about whether to use *she* or *her*. Use the word *Mary*.

All the children *except* Mary can play the piano.

All the children *but* Mary can play the piano.

Yes, *except* in this sentence means *but*.

If *except* means *but*, the word which follows *except* is the word that would follow *to*. To *her*.

Therefore: All the children except *her* can play the piano.

The following sentences are correct because *but* and *except* are interchangeable in them. (Read the device again.)

## How to Avoid Them

1. All the boys passed but *him*.
2. All but *him* passed.
3. Pass the candy to all but *her*; she has had just as much as is good for her.
4. Every child but *us* had a book.
5. All except *me* were admitted.
6. I spoke to all but *her*.
7. All but *them* behaved at the meeting.

### EXERCISE 16

Fill the blanks with correct words and consult answers on page 369, exercise 16.

1. Were you so rude as to give every one but ——— an invitation to the dance? (him-he)
2. I asked all but ———. (she-her)
3. All but ——— were asked. (she-her)
4. Every one but ——— took part in the entertainment. (I-me)
5. Every one except ——— took part in the entertainment. (I-me)
6. I saw all but ———. (them-they)

### NOTICE

*But* does not always mean *except*; *except* does not always mean *but*.

7. I shall go *but* he will remain in Buffalo.  
(*Except* cannot be used in sentence 7.)

## Pitfalls in English

8. If you *except* him, you are right in saying that they are fine boys.  
(*But* cannot be used in sentence 8.)

Sentences 7 and 8 are given to show that when *but* and *except* are not interchangeable, there is no difficulty in deciding what should follow.

Do not confuse the word *except* which sometimes means to *exclude* with *accept* which means to *receive*. See pages 120-122. Be careful in pronouncing *except* to have *ex* rhyme with *necks*; have *ac* in *accept* rhyme with *back*.

### IF

Always say: If I *were* you  
                  If I *were* he  
                  If I *were* she  
                  If I *were* Mary

### WHEN TO USE "WAS" AND WHEN TO USE "WERE" WITH "IF"

If the supposition is a fact, use *was*; if not a fact or if you are uncertain about the matter, use *were*.

1. If I *were* you (I cannot be you; this is not a fact), I'd go.

## How to Avoid Them

2. If she *were* he (She cannot be he; this is not a fact), she'd go.
3. If the chair *were* an antique (it is not), I'd buy it.
4. If the chair *was* an antique (and you had proof that it was), why didn't you buy it?
5. If the weather *were* pleasant (but it is not), I'd drive daily.
6. If the weather *was* pleasant (and you admitted it was), why didn't you go to school every day?
7. If the boy *was* there (you say he was), why didn't you speak to him about his mother?
8. If the chair *were* sent yesterday (I'm uncertain about this), I should think that you would have received it this morning.

## DO NOT USE "MOST" WHEN YOU MEAN "ALMOST."

"Almost" means "nearly."

### DEVICE

1. First, try *almost*.
  2. If *almost* can be used, use it.
  3. If not, use *most*.
- 
1. *Right*: I have *almost* finished. (nearly)
  2. *Right*: We walked *almost* five miles. (nearly)

## Pitfalls in English

3. *Right*: Make the *most* of your opportunities.
4. *Right*: This is the *most* critical moment of your life.
5. *Right*: She is a *most* agreeable person.

### OBSERVE THE ITALICIZED WORDS.

1. Neither she nor he *is* to go. (not *are*)  
Neither one *is* to go.
2. Both she and he *are* to go. (not *is*) Two  
*are* to go.
3. Either she or he *is* to blame. (not *are*)  
Either one or the other *is* to blame.
4. One or the other of the girls *is* to go. Either  
one or the other *is* to go.
5. Each one *is* to be presented with a flower.  
Each one *is*.
6. Every one *is* to be present. One *is*. (Don't  
worry about the word *every*.)
7. Everyone *is* to be there. (not *are*)
8. Everybody *is* to go. (not *are*)
9. Either she or *I* am to go. (*I*, coming second  
in the sentence, requires the word that  
belongs with *I*—*I am* not *I is*.)

### ACCURATE SPEECH IN CONVERSATION

It is all very well to devote your attention to clear enunciation of single words; it is necessary, however, to apply this attention every minute

## How to Avoid Them

in your conversation. Here are a few sentences that may show you wherein you are careless.

### ACTION WORDS

*Wrong:* He *come* over to see me yesterday.

*Right:* He *came* over to see me yesterday.

*Wrong:* I *run* across the street when I saw the policeman.

*Right:* I *ran* across the street when I saw the policeman.

*Wrong:* He *begun* the work yesterday.

*Right:* He *began* the work yesterday.

*Wrong:* He *swum* a mile.

*Right:* He *swam* a mile.

*Wrong:* The soloist *sung* two songs.

*Right:* The soloist *sang* two songs.

*Wrong:* The agent *rung* the bell.

*Right:* The agent *rang* the bell.

The words *come*, *run*, *begun*, *swum*, *sung*, *rung*, and many other words expressing action, are often used incorrectly. These words must often be used with a helping word like *has*, *have*, or *had*.

The way to eliminate this error is to memorize the three forms of the words which are included in the following list and observe with which ones you must use *has*, *have*, and *had*. There are

# Pitfalls in English

many other such words not included in the list. You will find them with their three different forms in the dictionary.

All the words in column one should be used alone or with the helping words *do, does, did, shall, will, may, can, must, might, could, should, would, to*.

All the words in column two represent the past and never need a helping word.

All the words in column three must be used with *has, have, had*, etc.

1	2	3
am (be)	was, were	been
ask	asked	asked
attack	attacked	attacked
be (am)	was, were	been
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bet	bet	bet
bid	bade or bid	bidden or bid
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast
build	built	built
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught

# How to Avoid Them

1	2	3
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
dive	dived	dived
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed	dreamed
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
drown	drowned	drowned
	(rhymes with <i>round</i> )	(rhymes with <i>round</i> )
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
fight	fought	fought
forget	forgot	forgotten
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung
	(an article)	(an article)
hang	hanged	hanged
	(a person)	(a person)
hear	heard	heard
heat	heated	heated

# Pitfalls in English

1	2	3
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt	knelt
knit	knit	knit
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
light	lighted	lighted
lighten	lightened	lightened
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
massacre	massacred (kerd)	massacred
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
put	put	put
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen

## How to Avoid Them

1	2	3
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shed	shed	shed
shine	shone-shined*	shone-shined
shoe	shod	shod
shrink	shrank	shrunk
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
skid	skidded	skidded
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slidden
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
spin	spun	spun
spring	sprang	sprung
steal	stole	stolen
swear	swore	sworn
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung

\*The sun *shone* brightly all day.

He *shined* my shoes. (*Polished* would be better in this sentence.)

# Pitfalls in English

1	2	3
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
thrust	thrust	thrust
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
wet	wet	wet
wind	wound	wound
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

As you are desirous of improving your speech you will like better the definite, preferred forms given in each column rather than a choice of forms.

## ILLUSTRATION:

The past of *knit* is *knit* or *knitted*.

You are given only one form (*knit*) because *knit* is preferable.

The past of *light* is *lighted* or *lit*.

You are given one form (*lighted*) because *lighted* is preferable.

When you are in doubt about any form of this type of word, consult the dictionary. See pages 234-237.

## How to Avoid Them

### WHEN TO USE THE "HAS" AND "HAVE" FORMS AND WHEN NOT TO USE THEM

*Has* and *have* forms are such expressions as *has gone, has been, has written, have written, have jumped, have swum, have begun, have run, etc.*

#### The Pitfall

##### *Wrong*

1. I *have written* to her yesterday.
2. He *has come* at two o'clock.
3. I *have swum* a mile yesterday morning.
4. He *has mailed* the letter this morning.
5. After school closed I *have worked* in an office.

##### *Right*

6. I *wrote* to her yesterday.
7. He *came* at two o'clock.
8. I *swam* a mile yesterday morning.
9. He *mailed* the letter this morning.
10. After school closed I *worked* in an office.

#### DEVICE

*Has* and *have* forms are correct when the sentence contains as a *limit of time the present moment*.

# Pitfalls in English

## OBSERVE:

Sentence 1 talks about yesterday and no other moment.

Sentence 2 mentions two o'clock and no other moment.

Sentence 3 mentions yesterday morning and no other time.

Sentence 4 mentions this morning and no other time.

Sentence 5 mentions the close of school and no other time.

Sentences 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 do not mention the present moment as the limit of time.

Therefore they should not contain *has* or *have*. (See sentences 6-10.)

## *Right*

11. Ever since the close of school I *have worked* in an office.
12. From the time that you made the request I *have not forgotten* to follow directions.
13. Since the war, food *has been* high.
14. From the time of the discovery of America until today history *has been recording* these facts.
15. I *have practiced* medicine for the last twenty years.

## How to Avoid Them

16. I *practiccd* medicine for twenty years.  
(After twenty years I changed my occupation.)

### OBSERVE:

Sentence 11 implies from the close of school *until today*.

Sentence 12 implies from the time of the request *until today*.

Sentence 13 implies from the end of the war *until the present time*.

Sentence 14 implies from 1492 *until today*.

Sentence 15 implies a practice reaching to *the present day*.

Sentence 16 *does not mean* that the time of practice reaches to the present day. Notice the omission of *have*.

### ANOTHER SUGGESTION

When a definite time is mentioned (last week, today, tomorrow, yesterday, last month, a moment ago, a few days ago, a few months ago, a few years ago, two o'clock), do not use *has* or *have*.

This suggestion in no way contradicts or conflicts with the device. It is an additional idea which may help you to decide quickly whether or not to use *has* or *have*.

Decide why the following are correct.

## Pitfalls in English

1. I went to Europe last year.
2. I have been to Europe three times.
3. I went to Europe three times about the matter.
4. He has failed to give satisfaction.
5. He failed to give satisfaction.
6. She has left the room.
7. She left the room a moment ago.
8. Mary has heard Paderewski play twice.
9. Mary heard Paderewski play twice.
10. I have joined the society.
11. I joined last week.

Here are the arguments for sentences 1-11 that will make the uses of *has* and *have*, or their omission, clear.

1. Do not use *have gone*. A definite time is stated (last year).
2. *Have been* is correct because the present day is understood to be the limit of time. Up to the present moment I have been to Europe three times.
3. Do not use *have gone*. From the previous conversation a definite time is understood. You and I are talking. I have occasion to say to you that I went to Europe three times about the matter. From the conversation you know that I mean during a

## How to Avoid Them

definite time. The present day, as a time limit, is not expressed.

4. *Has failed* is correct because the time limit is the present.
5. Do not use *has failed*. A definite time is understood. Perhaps the definite time is *when he held the position*.
6. *Has left* is correct because the present moment is the limit of time.
7. Do not use *has left*. A definite time (a moment ago) is stated.
8. *Has heard* is correct because the time limit is the present.
9. Do not use *has heard* because, from previous sentences in the conversation, the speaker gives you to understand that at a definite time (while Mary was in New York, while she was at college, while away, or last week in her own city) Mary heard Paderevski twice.
10. *Have joined* is correct because today is the limit of time.
11. Do not say *have joined* because a definite time is stated.

From these expressions you will see that you will sometimes determine whether or not to use the *has* and *have* forms by the sense of previous sentences.

# Pitfalls in English

## STATIONARY—STATIONERY

On a sign in the window of a local drug store is the following:

WE SELL

PENS, INK, STAMPS, AND STATIONARY

That sign is incorrect. Having it in the window for prospective customers to read is injurious to the proprietor's standing in that neighborhood. The store is cheapened by its presence.

Perhaps you are saying: "I never can remember when to spell this word with an *a* and when with an *e*."

It is easy to fix these words.

*Stationery* means paper and envelopes.

*Paper* ends with *er*.

*Stationery* requires *er*.

*Stationary* means fixed, immovable, permanent.

If the other word is *ery*, this one is *ary*.

*Right*

1. We have *stationary* bath-tubs. (fixed, immovable—not paper tubs)
2. We have *stationary* wash-basins.
3. We have *stationary* windows. (the kind which will not open)

## How to Avoid Them

4. We have *stationary* engineers. (They stay at and operate one engine.)
5. We have a *stationary* china closet in our home.
6. We have *stationary* washtubs in the cellar.
7. Always use white *stationery*. (paper and envelopes)
8. Do not use ruled *stationery*. (paper and envelopes)

### EXERCISE 17

Supply the correct word. Answers on page 369, exercise 17.

1. Did you engage a —— engineer?
2. I am a lover of exquisite ——.
3. The —— tubs are out of order.
4. Why did you build —— windows in that hall?
5. Put a piece of —— over the crack in that —— window to keep the snow out.
6. Do you use colored ——?
7. The stationer was having shelves put up for the display of his ——.
8. It is not considered in good taste to use highly colored ——. Neither should one use ruled ——.

# Pitfalls in English

## ONLY

Be sure to put *only* in its correct place in a sentence. It should be as near as possible to the word to which it is closely related.

Observe how the meaning is altered by the different positions of *only*.

Only I walked a mile. (Not any one else walked a mile.)

I only walked a mile. (I only walked; I did not run.)

I walked only a mile. (No more, no less.)

Only Kate had carfare. (Not any one else had carfare.)

Kate, only, had carfare. (Not any one else had carfare.)

Kate had only carfare. (She had no other money.)

## AVOID:

I *only have* two dollars.

I *only have* a small amount of butter on hand.

I *only have* one ticket.

Tom *only earns* four dollars a day.

She *only has* one child.

## SAY:

I have *only two* dollars.

I have *only a small amount* of butter on hand.

## How to Avoid Them

I have *only one* ticket.

Tom earns *only four* dollars a day.

She has *only one* child.

### SEPARATION OF "TO" FROM CERTAIN WORDS

Study the following:

*Wrong:* 1. I shall try to always be on time.

*Right:* 1. I shall try always *to be* on time.

*Right:* 1. I shall always try *to be* on time.

*Wrong:* 2. He asked to immediately have the money.

*Right:* 2. He asked *to have* the money immediately.

*Wrong:* 3. I asked you to promptly return the book.

*Right:* 3. I asked you *to return* the book promptly.

*Wrong:* 4. I told him to neatly write his name.

*Right:* 4. I told him *to write* his name neatly.

### CAUTION

Do not separate the word *to* from a following action word. (*Go, write, jump, walk, speak*, etc. are action words.)

# Pitfalls in English

NOTE: *Be* and *seem* and a few other words are in the class with action words, although they do not express action. They must never be separated from *to*.

## DEVICE

- a. Repeat the sentence omitting the word which tells *how* or *when*.
- b. Place the word immediately preceding the word which tells *how* or *when* (*to*) and the word which follows it next to each other.

This device will bring *to* and the *action word* together in the sentence.

## ILLUSTRATION:

In sentence 1 *always* is the word which tells *when*.

*To* is the word which precedes *always*.

*Be* is the word which follows *always*.

*To* and *be* must not be separated.

*Right:* I shall always try *to be* on time.

In sentence 2 *immediately* is the word which tells *when*.

*To* is the word which precedes *immediately*.

*Have* is the word which follows *immediately*.

*To* and *have* must not be separated.

*Right:* He asked *to have* the money immediately.

## How to Avoid Them

In sentence 3 *promptly* is the word which tells *when*.

*To* is the word which precedes *promptly*.

*Return* is the word which follows *promptly*.

*To* and *return* must not be separated.

*Right:* I asked you *to return* the book promptly.

In sentence 4 *neatly* is the word which tells *how*.

*To* is the word which precedes *neatly*.

*Write* is the word which follows *neatly*.

*To* and *write* must not be separated.

*Right:* I told him *to write* his name neatly.

## LEAVE—LET—LIEF

1. *Leave* means *allow to continue in any place or condition*.

*Wrong:* *Let* the book *there*. (in that place)

*Right:* *Leave* the book *there*. (in that place)

*Wrong:* *Let* the door *open*. (condition)

*Right:* *Leave* the door *open*. (condition)

2. *Leave* also means *depart, depart from*.

*Right:* I shall soon *leave* the city. (depart from)

*Right:* Do not *leave* me alone. (depart from me)

## Pitfalls in English

*Right:* When did he *leave*? (depart)

\**Right:* *Leave* me alone. (Depart from me. I wish to be alone.)

3. *Let* means *allow*. (in the sense of permit)

*Wrong:* *Leave* me go.

*Right:* *Let* me go. (Allow me to go.)

*Wrong:* *Leave* me have some money.

*Right:* *Let* me have some money. (Allow me to have some money.)

\**Right:* *Let* me alone. (Stop annoying me. Allow me to have peace.)

4. *Leave* means *departure*.

*Wrong:* He took a *lief* of absence.

*Right:* He took a *leave* of absence.

5. *Lief* means willingly.

*Wrong:* I'd as *leave* go by train as by boat.

*Right:* I'd as *lief* go by train as by boat.

\*Notice the difference between the two sentences marked with an asterisk (\*).

### EXERCISE 18

Supply the correct word in each of the following.

Consult the answers, page 370, exercise 18.

## How to Avoid Them

1. — the windows closed when you go out.
2. — me see your new purse, please.
3. — the kettle on the stove when you go out.
4. — me know as soon as you arrive.
5. — the gate closed.
6. He took a year's — of absence.
7. He said that he would just as — pay the bill now.
8. I shall soon — for New York.
9. — me go.
10. — me alone in this room. I wish to be quiet.

### GET

Present	Past	<i>Ing</i> form	With <i>has, have, had</i>
get	got	getting	got (avoid <i>gotten</i> )

Now you are going to get a surprise! You have undoubtedly studiously avoided the use of *get* in your Sunday conversation because your teachers have told you not to use the poor little word. After you have looked into the matter, you will find that it really is a very good, useful word, and correct in its place. If you were to eliminate all the *get's* and the *got's* from your speech, you would be at a loss to know what to use when you wished to say many things and your conversation would be stilted and stiff.

# Pitfalls in English

## OBSERVE:

You may	{	get up
		get down
		get in
		get out
		get off
		get on
		get over
		get away
		get along
		get through
		get together
		get back
		get home
get money		

and when you do “get up,” “get down,” “get in,” “get out,” you need have no fear of the ubiquitous nuisance who immediately pounces upon you with the question, “Is it correct to use *get* in that way? I am surprised at YOU!” I am sure that you know that person.

## BUT

since so many persons have an aversion to the use of *get*, it is perhaps often advisable to substitute some other word, if by so doing you will not appear forced in style.

# How to Avoid Them

## THESE ARE CORRECT:

In the sense of

to obtain	Did you get the money?
to procure	He tried to get possession of the property.
to learn	Did you get your lesson?
to earn	Her husband does not get a living out of the busi- ness.
to attain	I do wish that I could get a night's rest.
to catch	How did you get the mumps?
to cause to be in any condition	The child got her feet wet at the park.
to induce	Get him to come with us.
to lay in	We must soon get our coal for the winter.
to secure remission of punishment	He got off with a small fine.
to don	He got on his clothes and ran to the fire.
to finish	Hurry! Let us get it over quickly.
to arrange	They got up an entertain- ment.
to array	She got herself up in ridic- ulous style.

## Pitfalls in English

to arrive at	What time did you get to New York?
to come to be	They soon got to be friends.
to bring into a state, condition, or position	{ I couldn't get to sleep. Lena is getting well. We got there at four o'clock.
to go about	He doesn't get about much because of his heart.
to become current	The story got about through the maid.
to contrive to prosper, or avoid disaster	The brothers get along nicely.
to arrive at one's dwelling	When did you get home?
to effect an entrance	{ He got into my good graces. He got into the house by forcing a window.
to attain to intimacy	She tried to get in with the influential members of the club.
to escape	He got off easily.
to dismount	{ He got off the car. He had just got off the horse when he slipped.

## How to Avoid Them

to become accus- tomed	He never got over his daughter's elopement.
to finish	He gets through at five.
to succeed in pass- ing through an ordeal	He got through his exam- inations.
to come to an agree- ment	We can't get together on the price.
to rise	Get up, John; it is seven o'clock.

NOTE: Although all the words under "In the sense of" are in the present form, any variation of the word *get* has been used to show the different forms in sentences.

There are many more correct uses of *get*. If you are interested in knowing them, consult Webster's International Dictionary. Do not dispute the use of *get* until you have read all that is said about it in an unabridged dictionary.

*Has got, have got, had got* are correct when you mean *has obtained, have obtained, or had obtained*.

### *Correct*

\*I have got permission to go through the building.

### *Incorrect*

I have got blue eyes.

# Pitfalls in English

## EXPLANATION

I have obtained per- I did not obtain blue  
mission. eyes.

(This sentence should  
be: I have blue eyes.)

Remember that *has got*, *have got*, and *had got* are sometimes correct; but there is always a way of avoiding these expressions if you are not sure of yourself. Unless you fully understand how to use these three expressions never use them. You can easily avoid them.

## DEVICE

\*Try *has*, *have*, or *had* without the word *get*. If the word *get* cannot be omitted, you are safe in using it. In the sentence marked with an asterisk, *got* could be omitted if the speaker so desired.

## IDIOMS IN WHICH "GET" IS USED

An *idiom* is an expression the meaning of which as a whole cannot be understood from the meaning of the words which form it.

### ILLUSTRATION:

*Get out!* (This does not mean *to get out*. It means *Nonsense!*)

## How to Avoid Them

To obtain the privilege

of

*When he gets your ear,*  
you may as well make  
up your mind that  
you'll be late for dinner.

(The italicized part is  
the idiom.)

To capture

They've *got* the thief.

(They really have not  
the thief in their possession;  
but he is  
under arrest.)

## COLLOQUIALISMS

A *colloquialism* is an expression commonly used, though not of the best style.

Use colloquialisms and dialectic expressions only in familiar conversation.

to receive a sentence of    Mr. Smith got three months.

to corner                    Now I've got you.

to find as if by search    Now, what have you got to worry about?

to be obliged to            She's got to do it.

# Pitfalls in English

“catch”

You'll get it when father  
comes home.

to obtain an advan-  
tage over

She'll get the better of  
you every time.

## DIALECTIC

A *dialectic* expression is a form of speech peculiar to a section of the country or to a community.

To manage

I didn't get to go to the  
concert.

## SLANG IN WHICH “GET” IS USED

*Slang* applies to a word or an expression having conventional use, but vulgar or inelegant.

Avoid the following:

To become angry

Don't get your back up  
at every little thing.

## VULGAR

To be converted

Since he's got religion  
he has stopped gam-  
bling.

To take one's self off.

Git! (meaning to get  
away or go away)

# How to Avoid Them

## BRING—TAKE

DO NOT CONFUSE THESE TWO WORDS.

They offer much difficulty to the person who has not a natural discriminating power in the use of them. They are peculiar.

Use *bring* when the person to whom you are talking is at the place to which the article is to be conveyed.

A is talking to B at B's home.	I will bring you the book.
--------------------------------	----------------------------

A is talking over the telephone to B who is at home.	I will bring you the book.
--	----------------------------

B will be at C's later, when A leaves the book for B at C's home. (A is talking.)	I will bring the book to you at C's tomorrow.
---	---

Use *take* when the person to whom you are talking is not at the place to which the article is to be conveyed.

A is talking to B at B's home.	I will take the book to C and she will send it to you.
--------------------------------	--

# Pitfalls in English

A is talking to B over the telephone.      I will take the book to C and she will send it to you.

## THESE ARE CORRECT.

1. Be sure to bring my umbrella.
2. Be sure to take your umbrella.
3. Will you bring my white gloves over?
4. Will you take my white gloves over to Kate?
5. I think that I'll take my coat.

## EXPLANATION

1. Umbrella to be left where the speaker is.
2. Umbrella to be taken to a place where the speaker is not.
3. Gloves to be left where the speaker is.
4. Gloves to be left where the speaker is not.
5. Coat to be taken where the speaker is to be.

*Fetch* implies two actions: going for the article and conveying it to some other place.

Mother, lying on the couch, says to her son:

Please fetch me my shawl.

## How to Avoid Them

The son goes to the closet, gets the shawl, and hands it to his mother.

### HAVE YOU AN EAR FOR LANGUAGE?

In all languages, especially in English, there are many words which are so nearly alike in sound that unless one knows the word, how to spell it, pronounce it, and its meaning, it is well to look up the word in the dictionary when it is first heard.

For example, you may hear a person talking about an experience which necessitated his going to see the American Consul. Unless you know the word *consul* you are likely to think it is *council* or even *counsel*.

In the same way many persons mispronounce the words *environment* and *deteriorate*. When they hear them for the first time they hear them as *en-vi-ro-ment* and *de-ter-i-ate*. In the first one the *n* was not heard; in the second a whole syllable was omitted (*or*). Sometimes the speaker puts in a letter or a syllable as in the word *familiar* when called *farmiliar*. (The first *r* does not belong in the word.)

It behooves those not perfectly sure of a new word to look it up to know its spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and how to use it in a sentence. Suppose you have heard the word *consul*. You

## Pitfalls in English

look up *counsel* and you find that the meaning is not applicable in the sentence in which you heard it. You then look up *council* with the same result. By this time you discover by inquiry that there is a special word—*consul*—for this important personage who comes to your assistance when you are in difficulty in a foreign country. You have no idea how many persons are today speaking of him as the American *Counsel*.

If you look up *environment* the first time you hear it, you will perhaps be surprised to find the second *n* and you will be careful to include it in your pronunciation and spelling. A few of these surprises will make you careful before introducing a new word into your vocabulary and your English will soon show improvement. Above all things do not pick up new words from those with whom you converse unless you have the utmost confidence in them—and then do not. Find the new words in the dictionary before using them.

### SOME CONFUSING WORDS

#### COUNSEL—COUNCIL—CONSUL—CONSOLE

*counsel* has reference to advice, to advising, and to one who gives advice.

## How to Avoid Them

*council* is a group of persons having certain power.

*consul* is a government official residing in a foreign country.

*console* means a bracket and is applied to certain types of tables and other articles.

{ I shall seek *counsel* in the matter.  
    (advice)  
He is *counseling* his son now.  
    (advising)  
My *counsel* advised me to remain  
    with the firm. (adviser)

The *council* passed the law that forbade certain acts. (body of men)

The Italian *Consul* is too busy to see me today. (government representative)

She has a *console* table in her hall.  
    (type of table) (Accent the word *console* as used in this sentence on the first syllable.)

## IMPLY—INFER

*Imply* means to express indirectly; to insinuate.

## Pitfalls in English

*Infer* means to draw a conclusion from a remark.

The *speaker* or writer *implies*.

The *listener* or reader *infers*.

Your remark *implies* that you have been away.

From your remark I *infer* that you have been away.

Most good writers and speakers observe the distinction here given. It is better not to use the words interchangeably, even though Webster's dictionary gives *imply* as a meaning of *infer*.

### AFTERWARD—AFTERWARDS

These words are used interchangeably.

*Right: Afterwards* we played golf.

*Right: Afterward* we played golf.

### LEND—LOAN

Present	Past	Ing form	With <i>has</i> , <i>have</i> , <i>had</i>
lend	lent	lending	lent
loan	loaned	loaning	loaned

In financial dealings of importance, *loan* may be used for *lend*. A government *loans* money. A person *lends* money.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* I *loaned* her five dollars.

*Wrong:* I *lended* her five dollars.

*Right:* I *lent* her five dollars.

*Right:* I will *lend* you the money.

*Right:* I *lent* her the money yesterday.

*Right:* Have you *lent* the book?

*Right:* The United States will *loan* France money.

*\*Right:* The *loan* of the money is appreciated.

*\*Right:* I shall be glad of *the loan* of ten cents.

\*You can see that the word *lend* could not be used in these two sentences.

### REMEMBER

The recipient of the article *borrow*s.

The giver of the article *lend*s.

*Wrong:* May I *loan* five dollars?

*Wrong:* May I *lend* five dollars?

*Right:* May I *borrow* five dollars?

*Wrong:* He borrowed five dollars *off* me.

*Wrong:* He *borrowed me* five dollars.

*Right:* He *borrowed* five dollars *from me*.

### ELEMENT—ALIMENT—AILMENT

*element* one of the parts of anything.

*aliment* means food.

*ailment* means physical difficulty.

## Pitfalls in English

1. Hydrogen is an *element* of water.
2. Oxygen is an *element* of air.
3. One *aliment* of which you should eat sparingly is classed as carbohydrate.
4. She is always complaining of some *ailment*.

### ELEMENTARY—ALIMENTARY

*elementary* refers to the beginning.

*alimentary* relates to aliments. (foods)

1. In the *elementary* subjects she stood high.
2. The *alimentary* canal was the seat of the disease.

### BETWEEN—AMONG

*Between* is used with two things. .

*Among* is used with more than two things.

1. I divided the candy *between* the boy and his sister. (two persons)
2. She divided the money *among* the three sisters.
3. The papers were circulated *among* the guests.

### VOCATION—AVOCATION

*Vocation* refers to one's regular occupation.

*Avocation* refers to an occupation outside one's regular work.

## How to Avoid Them

is *vocation* is teaching.

e earns much money through his *avocation*, which is landscape gardening.

### BESIDES—BESIDE

*Besides* means in addition to.

*Beside* means by the side of.

have two houses *besides* (in addition to) the one in which I live.

ne house stands *beside* the other. (by the side of)

Wrong: I have two books *beside* this one.

Right: I have two books *besides* this one.

### THEN—THAN

*Then* includes the element of time. It sometimes means *in addition*.

*Than* compares two articles or kinds of articles.

When it stops raining, *then* I shall go. (When? What time? When it stops raining.)

He walked to the corner. *Then* he spoke. (When? After he reached the corner.)

*Then*, too, he did not obey instructions. (In addition to the other facts, he did not obey instructions.)

'd rather have these *than* those. (comparison)

## Pitfalls in English

*Wrong:* I'd rather have these as those. (This mistake is often made.)

Pronounce *than* so distinctly that it does not sound like *then*.

### ALL RIGHT—ALL READY—ALREADY

Never write *all right* as one word.

*Wrong:* alright, allright.

*Correct:* Come over this evening. All right.

*Correct:* How are the children? All right.

*All ready* is correct at times; *already* is correct at times.

*Correct:* Are you all ready? (everyone)

*Correct:* Mary has already gone.

*Caution:* Do not say: Mary has gone already.  
(*Already* should precede *gone*.)

*Caution:* Do not say *a'ready* for *already*.

### CUPFULS—PAILFULS—HANDFULS SPOONFULS

If the same cup, pail, hand, or spoon is re-filled, we say *cupfuls*, *pailfuls*, *handfuls*, and *spoonfuls*.

If different cups, pails, hands, spoons are filled, it is correct to say: two *cups full*, three *pails full*, two *hands full*, four *spoons full*.

# How to Avoid Them

## FOLK—FOLKS

*folk* a group of kindred people forming a tribe or a nation.

*folks* people in general or a special class.

The Indians are an interesting *folk*.

<i>Folks</i> often say what they do not mean.	} familiar speech.
They are fine <i>folks</i> .	
How are the <i>folks</i> ?	

## DUTCH—GERMAN

The word *German* in the German language is *Deutsch* pronounced to rhyme with *boytch*. The word *Deutsch*, appearing so much like the word *Dutch*, misleads many persons who use the word *Dutch* for *German*. They say, "He is a *Dutchman*," when they mean that he is a *German*.

A person born in Holland is called either a *Hollander* or a *Dutchman*.

A person born in Germany is called a *German*. He is not a *Dutchman*.

Do not say *Holland Dutch* for *Dutch* or *Dutchman*.

If you think that the person to whom you are talking does not know what you mean when

## Pitfalls in English

you say *Dutch*, amplify your remark with some comment about Holland.

### TOO—TWO—TO

These three words often cause trouble.

Use *too* when either *very* or *also* can be substituted.

Use *two* when you mean the number.

Use *to* when neither *too* nor *two* can be used.

I am *too* busy to see you. (*very* busy)

I, *too*, am going. (*also*)

I have *two* dollars. (*number*)

She goes *to* the Baptist church. (*Too* and *two* not applicable)

I, *too*, (*also*) am *too* (*very*) tired *to* (*neither also nor very*) walk *two* (*number*) miles.

### INGENIOUS—INGENUOUS

*Ingenious* means clever; possessed of ingenuity.

*Ingenuous* means possessed of the characteristics of a child.

An *ingenious* person often makes money by his wit.

An *ingenuous* girl is charming in her simplicity.

# How to Avoid Them

## OBSERVANT—OBSERVING

*Observant* means watchful; capable of taking in details.

*Observing* means watching.

She is an *observant* person. She notices details.

She is *observing* my work.

## COSTLY—COSTIVE

*Costly* means expensive.

*Costive* means constipated or causing constipation.

Her jewels were *costly*.

The man was in a *costive* condition while in the hospital.

Cheese is a *costive* food.

Cheese is both *costly* and *costive*. (*Costive* is a word used only to one's doctor.)

## PHASE—FAZE

*Phase* is any of the different appearances of an object.

*Phase* may be used in connection with mental view.

# Pitfalls in English

*Faze* means to worry; vex; annoy. (an expression used in the United States)

The crescent *phase* of the moon is visible at certain times.

From this *phase* of the question, your desire to sell is justifiable.

Your bullying can't *faze* me.

## LAVATORY—LABORATORY

*Lavatory* is a wash-room. (A small room containing a wash-bowl is correctly called a lavatory.)

*Laboratory* is a room or a building in which certain work is carried on.

Get some water from the *lavatory* and water the plants.

The doctor and the chemist experiment in a *laboratory*.

## VERSE—STANZA

*Verse* is a line of poetry.

*Stanza* is a number of consecutive lines or verses.

*Wrong:* The poem has three *verses* of eight lines each.

*Right:* The poem has three *stanzas* of eight *verses* each.

*Right:* The poem has three *stanzas* of eight *lines* each.

## How to Avoid Them

The two preceding sentences mean the same thing. When you mean that you have read a group of lines, do not say, "I have read the first *verse*." That means that you have read only one *line*. Say that you have read the first *stanza*.

### BAR—MEASURE

*Bar* is a perpendicular line separating music into measures.

*Measure* is all the notes and rests included between two consecutive bars.

*Wrong:* I played a few *bars* of the piece on the piano.

*Right:* I played a few *measures* of the piece on the piano.

*Right:* What is the syllable name of the first note after the second *bar*?

*Right:* How many beats are there in each *measure*?

### DELETED—DEPLETED

*Deleted* means taken out, obliterated, erased.

*Depleted* means reduced.

Part of his letter was *deleted* before the authorities would allow him to send it.

## Pitfalls in English

The stock is *depleted* just now, because it is so late in the season.

### RELIGION OR NATIONALITY—WHICH?

Do not confuse religion with nationality.

*Religion* refers to form of worship.

*Nationality* refers to country.

*Wrong:* I did not know that you were German.  
I thought you were Jewish.

*Wrong:* I did not know that you were Irish. I  
thought you were Catholic.

A person is Spanish or German or French or Irish by virtue of his nationality.

A person is Jewish or Catholic or Presbyterian by virtue of his religion.

A man may be a German Jew, a Spanish Jew, a French Jew.

A man may be a German Catholic, an Irish Catholic, a French Catholic.

### SWEAT—PERSPIRATION

Animals *sweat*.

Horses *sweat*.

The doctor prescribed a *sweat*.

Persons *perspire* unless the perspiration is intense having been forced by artificial means or through illness. In such cases we say *sweat*.

## How to Avoid Them

*Vulgar:* Your forehead is covered with sweat.

*Vulgar:* I'm sweating.

*Vulgar:* I'm sweaty.

*Vulgar:* My hands are sweating.

*Vulgar:* My hands are sweaty.

*Correct:* Keep still about it. But if you must confide this important matter say, "I'm perspiring."

(This is a matter of opinion. Some authorities say that it is finical to avoid the word *sweat*. Most persons of refinement, however, do not use it.)

Be sure to pronounce correctly the words *perspire*, *perspired*, *perspiring*, *perspiration*. The first syllable is *p-e-r*; not *p-r-e-s*.

## FARTHER—FURTHER

To use these words interchangeably is not a serious violation of precision of speech. *Far*, *farther*, *further*, *farthest*, *furthest*—all of these may be used in referring to space covered. *Further* has another meaning. It means *additional*.

The dictionary states that *further* means *farther*. *Further* may be used for *farther*; but it is not always correct to use *farther* for *further*. You can readily see that when *further* means *additional*, *farther* cannot be used.

See sentences 4 and 5.

## Pitfalls in English

The best writers and speakers use *far*, *farther*, *farthest* in referring to space. They use *further* to mean *additional* and they seldom use *furthest*.

*Right:* 1. How far did you walk?

*Right:* 2. She walked *farther* (or *further*) than I.  
(two persons)

*Right:* 3. John walked *farthest* (or *furthest*) of  
all. (more than two persons)

*Right:* 4. I shall not allow him to go to the  
picnic; *further* (additional punishment)  
than that, he is to be kept in the house until he can behave.

*Right:* 5. Have you anything *further* (additional)  
to say?

*Wrong:* Is that all the *farther* you're going?

*Right:* Is that *as far as* you are going?

*Farther* is used in comparing two distances.  
See pages 122-128.

## RELIC—RELICT

*Relic*, something remaining, a keepsake.

*Relict* means *widow*. It is seldom used to mean *widower*.

His curio cabinet is filled with interesting  
*relics*.

## How to Avoid Them

Mrs. Jones, *relict* of John Jones, has bought the property.

### ARRANGEMENT—ARRAIGNMENT

*Arrangement* means the placing of things.

*Arraignment* means accusation in court.

I like the *arrangement* of the furniture in her home.

He was *arraigned* in court on a charge of murder in the first degree.

arraign            is pronounced ar-rain

arraigned        is pronounced ar-rained

arraigning       is pronounced ar-raining

arraignment is pronounced ar-rainment

### ADVISE—INFORM

*Advise* means to give someone the benefit of your thought regarding a certain subject.

*Inform* means to impart ideas or information.

*Wrong:* I shall *advise* you when we leave.

*Right:* I shall *inform* you when we leave.  
(impart the information, tell you)

*Right:* I will *advise* you when to plant the seed.  
(a promise to give *advice* about planting)

# Pitfalls in English

*Right:* I will *inform* you when to plant the seed.  
(a promise to tell you when to begin  
planting. This is not a promise of  
*advice*.)

## DIFFERENT FROM

not

## DIFFERENT THAN

- A *Wrong:* This satin is *different* in quality *than*  
that piece.
- B *Right:* This satin is *different* in quality *from*  
that piece.
- C *Wrong:* It was *different than* I expected it to  
be.
- D *Right:* It was *different from* what I expected  
it to be.
- E *Right:* I think that this piece is better *than*  
that.

In sentences A, B, C, D, E, two articles are compared.

When the word *different* is used, use *from*;  
when *different* is not used, use *than*.

If, after the word *different*, you cannot use  
*from*, add another word or reconstruct your  
sentence.

### ILLUSTRATION:

Sentence C. *Different than* is wrong.

## How to Avoid Them

Sentence D. After *different from* it was necessary to insert the word *what*.

### CORRESPOND TO—CORRESPOND WITH

*Correspond to* is correct when you are speaking of matching objects.

*Correspond with* is correct when you are referring to correspondence.

*Wrong:* This stocking corresponds *with* that one.  
(One stocking cannot write a letter to another.)

*Right:* This stocking corresponds *to* that one.  
(This stocking matches that one.)

*Right:* John corresponds *with* Mary. They enjoy each other's letters.

### PERSONS—PEOPLE

Use *persons* when individuals are meant.

Use *people* when a mass of humans is meant.

Three *persons* (not *people*) sat on the stage.

Most *persons* like the climate of California.

The young *people* of the church had a meeting.

The American *people* are a mass of enthusiasts.

# Pitfalls in English

## WOMAN—LADY

\*Ordinarily *woman* is preferred to *lady*.

Do not say *lady*-doctor. Say *woman*-doctor.

Do not say *wash-lady* or *wash-woman*. Say *washerwoman*.

\*If a child wishes to report to his mother that there is a woman at the door, unless he uses a polite intonation, he is likely to sound rude if he says *woman*. He might better say *lady*. For some reason, however, most persons prefer *woman* to *lady*.

## DOCTRESS, INSTRUCTRESS

Most of these feminine endings are now being dropped.

We may say *actor*, *doctor*, *instructor*, regardless of whether a man or a woman is meant.

## HEALTHY—HEALTHFUL

*Healthy* is applied to persons and animals.

*Healthful* is applied to food or to anything else which gives health to persons and animals.  
(exercise)

Rover is a *healthy* dog.

The man is *healthy* and strong.

Exercise is *healthful*.

## How to Avoid Them

Dancing and walking are *healthful* exercise.  
A *healthful* climate is all that man needs.  
Bread is a *healthful* food.  
Fresh air is *healthful*.  
Baths are *healthful*.

### PROVIDED—PROVIDING

*Provided* means *on condition that* or *if*.

*Providing* means *supplying*.

Many persons say I shall go *providing* that you  
go with me. (wrong)

They should say I shall go *provided* that you  
go with me. (right)

### DEVICE

Substitute:

*on condition that*                      *or supplying.*

1. He will go ——— that it does not  
rain.

He will go *on condition that* it does  
not rain.

Therefore: He will go *provided* that it does not  
rain.

2. He is ——— me with the money.

He is *supplying* me with the  
money.

Therefore: He is *providing* me with the money.

## Pitfalls in English

3. They are —— the family with food.

They are *supplying* the family with food.

Therefore: They are *providing* the family with food.

4. Father will take you —— that you behave.

Father will take you *on condition that* you behave.

Therefore: Father will take you *provided* that you behave.

5. He will purchase that house —— he has the money.

He will purchase that house *on condition that* he has the money.

Therefore: He will purchase that house *provided* he has the money.

NOTE: Sometimes the word *that* appears in the sentence. You will then consider *provided* to mean *on condition* instead of *on condition that*. (Sentences 1 and 4)

It is better English to use the word *that* in the sentence. (Sentences 1 and 4)

# How to Avoid Them

## EXPECT—SUPPOSE—THINK—GUESS

Many persons use these words interchangeably. They have not exactly the same meanings. Care must be exercised in using them.

*Expect* always looks into the future. Whatever one expects has not yet happened.

*Suppose* means to assume as true. It may refer to the present, past, or future.

*Think* means to form an opinion.

*Guess* means to hazard an opinion.

### CORRECT USE OF EACH

I *expect* to go to New York next week.

I *suppose* I am unnecessarily worried. (present)

I *suppose* I was unnecessarily worried. (past)

I *suppose* I shall be very anxious until the operation is over. (future)

I *think* that Lake Erie is not so deep as Lake Ontario.

I *guess* that there are three thousand beans in that jar.

Slight differences in the following words need cause you no worry.

Present  
awake

Past  
awoke or awaked

# Pitfalls in English

wake  
awaken

waked or woke  
awakened

*Ing* form  
awaking  
waking  
awakening

With *has, have, had*  
awaked or awoke  
waked or woke  
awakened

Any one of the words under each of the four headings is correct in its proper place.

I *awoke* yesterday at six.

I *awaked* yesterday at six.

I *woke* yesterday at six.

I *awakened* yesterday at six.

These are all sentences expressing action in the past.

## FEW—LESS

*Few* is used with articles which can be counted.

*Less* is used with articles that are measured in bulk.

*few* eggs

*few* pennies

*few* books

*less* butter

*less* milk

*less* water

*few* pencils

*few* apples

*less* fuel

*less* ointment

## STOP—STAY

*Stop* means to come to a halt.

*Stay* means to remain.

*Wrong:* We *stopped* at the Pennsylvania Hotel.

## How to Avoid Them

*Stopped* in this sentence would be correct if you meant to say that you halted there for a few moments and then went on.

*Right:* We *stayed* at the Pennsylvania Hotel.

*Right:* The horse *stopped* in front of the house.

## LUNCH AND LUNCHEON

These words are interchangeable.

1. In formal social affairs one is invited to a *luncheon*. (This is merely a matter of custom.)
2. In simple daily affairs one may invite a guest to *lunch* or to *luncheon*.

To use *a* or *the* before the word *luncheon* indicates that the affair is being given for several.

To omit *a* before the word *lunch* or *luncheon* usually indicates an informal home meal with or without guests.

*Right:* At *lunch* today we were  
much amused by a story  
that Kate told.

*Right:* At *luncheon* the children be-  
haved so badly that we  
sent them from the table.

*Right:* Come to *lunch* tomorrow,  
Mary.

*Right:* Come to *luncheon* tomor-  
row, Mary.

(Informal)

# Pitfalls in English

*Right:* I am giving a *luncheon* for Mary in honor of her guest. (formal)

## O—OH

Use *O* only in addressing a person by the use of his name.

Use *oh* at all other times.

1. *O*, John, why did you come so late?
2. *Oh!* I feel so bad over the loss of the pin.
3. *O*, Mary! Call your mother; I am fainting.

In sentence 2 someone is being addressed but as the name is not mentioned, *oh* is correct.

Never write *O* with a small letter.

Never capitalize *oh* unless it is the first word of a sentence or of a line of poetry.

## UNLESS—WITHOUT

*Unless* is followed by an expression which makes a complete thought.

*Without* is followed by an expression which does not make a complete thought.

*Wrong:* I will not go *without* you do.

*Right:* I will not go *unless* you do. (*You do* is a complete thought.)

*Right:* I will not go *without* you.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong:* He will not pass *without* he studies very hard.

*Right:* He will not pass *unless* he studies very hard. (*He studies very hard* is a complete thought.)

*Right:* He will not pass *without* studying hard.

*Wrong:* We shall have no nuts *without* we have a frost.

*Right:* We shall have no nuts *unless* we have a frost. (*We have a frost* is a complete thought.)

*Right:* We shall have no nuts *without* a frost.

### ELSE

#### SENTENCES SHOWING THE CORRECT USE

1. Have you seen anybody *else* about the matter?
2. How *else* could he do it?
3. He is *lazy*, *else* I should help him.

You will find authority for *somebody's else*, *anyone's else*.

There is also authority for *somebody else's*, *anyone else's*.

Since either is correct, you may choose between the two; but most careful persons prefer and use the second form: *else's*.

*Right:* This is somebody *else's* umbrella.

# Pitfalls in English

## TALK TO—TALK WITH

To talk *to* a person is to address remarks to him.

He may reply or he may not.

To talk *with* a person is to address remarks to him and listen to his replies. When you talk *with* a person you expect to speak and listen alternately.

Mrs. A. to Mr. A.: I do wish you'd see that John gets up earlier for school.

Mr. A. to Mrs. A.: I'll *talk to* him about his laziness.

Mrs. A. to Mr. A.: Has John decided to accept the position?

Mr. A. to Mrs. A.: Not yet; he is to *talk with* the manager today regarding the duties, hours, and salary.

## IN—INTO

*In* implies motion or rest inside a place.

*Into* implies motion from exterior to interior.

He walked *in* the room

## How to Avoid Them

means that he walked around the interior of the room.

He walked *into* the room

means that he walked from the exterior (hall) of the room to the interior.

Put the book *into* the desk.

(Teachers should not say, "Put the book *under* the desk." Under the desk may mean *on the floor*.)

## IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES—UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Both expressions are correct.

## VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

1. Vowels: a, e, i, o, u.
2. Consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z.

*W* belongs to group 1 when it is used like the vowel sound *u* in *how* (hou).

*Y* belongs to group 1 when it is used like the vowel sound *i* in *try* (tri).

Observe: *An* is used before words beginning with the sound of any letter in Group 1.

# Pitfalls in English

*an* orange, *an* apple, *an* honest man,  
*an* honorable man, *an* egg, *an* alibi,  
*an* uncle, *an* island

*Honest* begins with *h* but the *h* is silent; hence *honest* appears to begin with *o*. It begins with a vowel sound, though it begins with a consonant; therefore *an* honest man.

Observe: *A* is used before words beginning with the sound of any letter in Group 2.

*a* horse, *a* book, *a* tree, *a* better effort.

Observe: When *the* is used before words beginning with the sound of any letter in Group 1, it rhymes with *me*.  
*the* apple, *the* orange.

Observe: When *the* is used before words beginning with the sound of any letter in Group 2, it is pronounced as though spelled *thu*—the (thu) book.

## REVEREND—HONORABLE

### IN TITLES

The points to remember about these words are:

1. Never use them without the word *the*.

## How to Avoid Them

2. Do not capitalize the word *the* in connection with *Reverend* and *Honorable* unless it is the first word of the sentence.
3. Capitalize *reverend* and *honorable*.
4. NEVER USE *REVEREND* AND *HONORABLE* WITH A SURNAME (last name) ALONE.

### *Wrong*

I met Reverend Boynton. (*The* is omitted and the surname is used alone.)

Have you written to the reverend Mr. Boynton? (*Reverend* is written with a small letter.)

The honorable Mr. Jones is present. (*Honorable* is written with a small letter.)

Honorable Tracy cannot be here. (*The* is omitted and the surname is used alone.)

### *Right*

I met *the Reverend Mr.* Boynton.

I met *the Reverend James* Boynton.

I met *the Reverend Mr. James* Boynton.

I met *the Reverend Dr. James* Boynton.

I met *the Reverend J. C.* Boynton.

*The Honorable Mr.* Jones is present.

*The Honorable James* Tracy will not be present.

NOTE: Read points 1, 2, 3, 4 again.

# Pitfalls in English

## DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE A DICTIONARY?

Experience in teaching adults has proved that an unusual number do not know how to use a dictionary. It is useless to attempt to find the pronunciation of a word if you do not understand the diacritical marks used to indicate the various sounds.

In purchasing a dictionary be sure to get the best. Some dictionaries have on the cover the name of a reputable volume but on the first fly leaf there can be found a statement in very small type to the effect that the book is not the regular ————— edition. For various reasons these books are of little or no use. Sometimes the diacritical marks are missing; sometimes they are others than those in daily use; sometimes words which have come into the language as long ago as ten years are not included.

A good dictionary will help you to increase your vocabulary because of the number of synonyms which it contains. It will teach you spelling, pronunciation, meaning, how to divide the word into syllables, the various inflections, and many facts about documents, persons, and cities. Your language will be enriched. Get the dictionary habit.

Having purchased your dictionary, you must

## How to Avoid Them

first become familiar with the numerous diacritical marks which are fully explained in the fore part of the book. This will take much time. Indeed the entire introduction should be carefully read and studied for the purpose of ascertaining what all the abbreviations and various symbols in addition to the diacritical marks mean. One reading will not fix this information. You will have to read and reread and then constantly refer to the introduction before you will use the dictionary with ease and certainty. But you will be well repaid for your trouble; and the feeling of certainty that will be yours will be a source of gratification.

Suppose you use the word *ain't*. Someone criticizes you. You look it up in Webster's Elementary School Dictionary. You find on page 14 of the 1914 edition (the one you happen to have at hand):

*ain't* (ānt). Contr. for *are not* or *am not*; also used for *is not*;—a vulgarism.

If you know, as you probably do, that the straight line over the *a* (*ā*) means to pronounce the *a* as *a* in *plate*, you will then know that that word is pronounced *ain't* to rhyme with *paint*. (Besides, you knew how to pronounce the word before you looked it up. You are merely looking it up to see if it is in repute.) You notice the abbreviation, *Contr.* You may not know

## Pitfalls in English

what that means. You will find on page xvi, column 1, that *contr.* is explained to mean *contraction*. If you do not know what *contraction* means you must look up the word. Now you say to your critical friend, "There! I told you so. *Ain't* is in the dictionary." But your friend calls your attention to the word *vulgarism* and explains to you what you would have found out for yourself, had you looked up *vulgarism*, that *ain't* is considered common, coarse, and inelegant. Therefore he was justified in criticizing you.

Suppose that you looked up the word in Funk and Wagnalls' Desk Standard Dictionary, edition of 1925, page 24. You found:

ain't, 1 ēnt; 2 ānt. Colloq. *am not; are not*. Illiterate for *is not, has not, have not*. *an't* ‡.

If you have not looked up the diacritical marks used in this book, you will think that *e* with the straight line over it (*ē*) is pronounced like *e* in *me*. You will wonder why two pronunciations are given. You will not know what *colloq.* means. You may not know what *illiterate* means and the difference between *illiterate* and *colloquial*. You will perhaps not know what *an't* ‡ means. Every one of these points is explained in the fore part of the book, excepting the meaning of *illiterate* which is, of course, in the body of the dictionary.

## How to Avoid Them

*Ain't* is only one of many words to be found in the dictionary which are not to be used by persons who wish to speak with style.

It is to be hoped that your interest in a dictionary has been aroused. Whenever you want any information, population of cities, meaning of foreign words and expressions, abbreviations, proper names, tables of weights and measures, foreign coinage, go to your dictionary. If it is not to be found, you can always look elsewhere; but most likely you will find the information desired. The dictionary has many surprises for you if you will but make it your friend.

An unabridged dictionary is one which contains every word in the language. An abridged dictionary is one containing only some of the words. *Abridged* means *shortened*.

If you can afford only one, buy an abridged edition because it will serve most purposes and you can pack it in your suit-case when you go away. Besides you always have access to the unabridged dictionaries at your public library. Ask the attendant where they are kept.

## PRONUNCIATION—ENUNCIATION VOCABULARY

What is the difference between *pronunciation* and *enunciation*? The dictionary makes little

## Pitfalls in English

distinction between the two words; but usage has effected a slight difference. You may pronounce a word correctly and not enunciate distinctly. You may pronounce the word *effect* in such a way as to cause it to sound like *uffect*. In such a case your enunciation is poor.

Correct pronunciation indicates education. Good enunciation indicates style.

### PRONUNCIATION

Many persons go through life blissfully ignorant of the fact that they are mispronouncing many words. They pick up pronunciation, one from the other, without regard to the education (or lack of it) of those whom they imitate. Even many educated persons mispronounce such frequently used words as *inquiry*, *coupon*, *address*, *adult*, *allies*, *oleomargarine*, *creek*.

### ENUNCIATION

Others pronounce correctly but do not give the vowels and consonants their proper values. They clip final t's, pronounce words with *ing* as though they end with *een* (*going* is mispronounced *goeen*), they carelessly drop the *g*, saying *goin'* for *going*. A word ending in *sts* they pronounce in a slovenly manner so that *resists* becomes *resis'*. *Distinctly* becomes *dis-tinkly*. *Exactly* becomes *exakly*. The *ed* in

## How to Avoid Them

*asked* one seldom hears, and so on through innumerable examples.

### VOCABULARY

Many of us have scores of words stored in our minds but we do not use them. We keep them locked up as we do our best china for state occasions; only with words the result is different—when the state occasion comes we forget to use them and they never become a part of our working vocabulary. We should have no state occasions for good English. We should use our best English to every one, regardless of his education, provided that he understands our language. That we know the meanings of many more words than we use is proved by the fact that we understand practically every word that we meet in the newspaper or magazine, though those same words are not to be heard in our daily conversation.

### JOT DOWN AND LOOK UP

If you follow this slogan you will today purchase a notebook small enough to carry with you at all times. Every time you hear a new word or a strange pronunciation of a familiar word you will jot it down and look it up at your first opportunity.

## Pitfalls in English

Do not stop with words alone. Make a note of every new expression which seems pertinent, pleasing, or rhythmical. Use these expressions as soon as possible until they seem to belong to you. Good English is like water and air. There can be no corner in the market. It is as free to you as to the most learned and prosperous in your community.

Use your little book when riding back and forth to school and to business. Refer to it at every opportunity and see how many words and expressions you will absorb in a short time. Cultivate words; make them yours.

### PITFALLS IN PRONUNCIATION

No matter how correct your grammar may be, if your pronunciation is incorrect or antiquated, your English will lack style. A beautiful sermon may be spoiled by the mispronunciation of a word; the confidence of an educated audience may be shaken because the speaker is careless in his pronunciation; an applicant may not obtain the desired position because of his mispronunciation of a word. All other things being equal, the one who pronounces his words clearly and correctly makes the favorable impression.

How much do you take for granted in the

## How to Avoid Them

matter of pronunciation? If your minister pronounces a word in a way different from yours, do you immediately change your way to his without looking up the word? If you do, you are making a great mistake. He is an authority on religion, not on English; though of course we do look to the pulpit for good English. If you wish to be sure about a word, consult your dictionary.

Some of the following words are so simple that you will wonder at their presence. Those are the very words which you are perhaps mispronouncing. The fact that they are recorded here indicates that there is something unusual about them and that many persons—even among the well educated—are mispronouncing them.

A few of the words have two correct pronunciations. The first one given in the dictionary is conceded to be preferable. For that reason I have usually given but one—the first. Do not bother your head about the second one unless you wish to decide a dispute regarding pronunciation. (Then—I say this facetiously—if you look far enough, you will find authority for almost anything.)

You will probably wonder why it is that I am showing pronunciation without the use of diacritical marks. It is because I wish to make

## Pitfalls in English

the correct pronunciation of certain words so clear that even those who do not understand the many dots, dashes, and curves employed in the dictionary may grasp my meaning.

If you do not know how to interpret the various marks used in a dictionary, you would not be able to interpret them in this book. You will find the method here employed so easy to understand and you will experience so many surprises that you will be stimulated to look up many more words as you meet them in your reading.

### ILLUSTRATION:

Webster's dictionary gives you the following under the word *oleomargarine*:

(o'le-o-mar' ga-rine -ō-mär'-gà-rēn)

You have a general idea of its pronunciation. Unless you know the meaning of the marks (*g* without a mark over or under it is like *g* in *get*) in connection with the letters of this word, they are of no value to you. Instead of showing all the diacritical marks, I have made clear to you that the *g* sounds like the *g* in *Margaret*. See page 255.

You are surprised. Why? You have taken it for granted because your grocer called this article "oleomarjarine," that there was no need of

## How to Avoid Them

looking up the word in the dictionary. Never take anyone's word for pronunciation. Begin today to interest yourself in words. Buy a good dictionary and at once begin to familiarize yourself with the meaning of each mark. Every time you look up a word refer to the key (explanation of marks) in the fore part of the book. Finally you will have mastered every one.

You will now read the words which are used most commonly in everyday conversation, many of which are mispronounced by nine out of ten persons. Most of the words in this list are thoroughly familiar to you; they are not words about which you have no idea. For that reason I have merely pointed out to you the syllable which perhaps you have been mispronouncing and shown you its correct pronunciation. The other syllables in the words I have disregarded.

Authority—Webster's International Dictionary.

### PRONUNCIATION

of the following words is shown by a method which can be understood by all. No diacritical marks are used. If the usual mistake is one of accent, the mistake and the correction are shown by the use of capitals. The capitalized syllable is to be stressed.

# Pitfalls in English

## ILLUSTRATION

inquiry

*wrong:* IN-qui-ry

*right:* in-QUIR-y

If the usual mistake is one of vowel or consonant sound, the correction is shown by spelling, or by giving a syllable or a word with which the correct pronunciation of the mispronounced syllable or word rhymes. No attention in such cases is paid to accent.

In giving correct pronunciation often the word is divided incorrectly to make clearer the pronunciation.

## ILLUSTRATION

accompaniment

*Wrong:* ac-com-ple-ment

*Right:* ac-company-ment

In order to show that you will hear the word *company* if you pronounce the word *accompaniment* correctly, the word is divided so as to show the word *company* (ac-company-ment).

In the word *December* the accent would probably never be misplaced. The difficulty here is that many persons say De-zem-ber. Pitfalls of this sort are pointed out, but the accent is not shown.

## How to Avoid Them

Only *preferred* pronunciations found in Webster's International Dictionary are given in the third column.

Many persons consult a dictionary only when they wish to know the meaning of a word. After studying the following words you will see the necessity of constantly referring to the dictionary for pronunciation and spelling as well as for meaning.

Even though you fully understand the method here used in showing correct pronunciation, you ought to begin at once to master the diacritical marks in the dictionary.

Then you will be able to avoid such mistakes as pronouncing *heat* to rhyme with *met* (het). You will understand that "heat, hēt" says briefly but plainly to you, through the short line over the *e* (ē),

"*Heat* rhymes with *meet*."

Begin today to master the diacritical marks.

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
abdomen	AB-do-men	ab-DO-men
accelerator	ex-il-er-a-tor	ak-sel-er-a-tor
accessible	as-sess-i-ble	ak-sess-i-ble
accessories	as-sess-o-ries	ak-sess-o-ries
acclimate	AC-cli-mate	ac-CLI-mate
When you pronounce this word correctly you hear the word <i>climate</i> .		

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
accompaniment	ak-kom-ple-ment	ak-company-ment
accurate	ak-ka-rat	ak-u-rat
across	a-crosst	a-cross
address	AD-dress	ad-DRESS
	This word is always accented on the second syllable whether it means a sermon or the superscription on an envelope.	
adjective	ad-ja-tiv	ad-jek-tiv
adult	ADD-dult	ad-DULT
	Say the word <i>adulterate</i> and you will have a good idea of how to pronounce the word <i>adult</i> .	
adversary	ad-VER-sa-ry	ADD-ver-sa-ry
aeroplane	a-re-o-plane	a-er-o-plane
affect	uf-fect	af-fect
affluence	af-FLU-ence	AF-flu-ence
again	a-gane	a-gen
		<i>Again</i> rhymes with <i>a hen</i> .
alias	a-LIE-us	A-lee-us
alienation	a-lin-e-a-tion	ale-yen-a-tion
alimentary	el-e-men-ta-ry	al-i-men-ta-ry
allies	AL-lies	al-LIES
almond	al-mond	ah-mund
		Sound <i>a</i> as in <i>ah</i> ; <i>l</i> is silent.
aluminum	al-oo-min-um	al-yu-min-um
antarctic	ant-ar-tic	ant-ark-tic
applicable	ap-PLIK-a-bl	AP-plik-a-bl
architect	arch-i-tekt	ar-ki-tekt
arctic	ar-tik	ark-tik
arithmetic	a-rif-me-tic	a-rith-me-tic

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
asinine	ass-nine	ass-in-nine Observe the spelling in column 1: only one <i>s</i> .
asked	ask, ast Yesterday I <i>ahskt</i> (not <i>ask</i> ) him to go.	ahskt
asparagus	as-par-a-grass	as-par-a-gus
asphalt	ash-fault	ASS-falt ( <i>al</i> as in <i>alley</i> )
ate	et (poor)	ate (rhymes with <i>plate</i> )
athletic	ath-a-let-ic	ath-let-ic
attacked	at-tak-ted	at-takt
aunt	ant	ahnt
automobile	aw-to-mo-bul	aw-to-MO-bil or aw-to-mo-BEEL
aversion	a-ver-zhun	a-ver-shun
Axminster	Ax-min-is-ter	Ax-min-ster
bade	bayed	bad
because	be-kuz	be-kaws
been	ben	bin and bean
believe	ba-lieve	be-lieve
blasé	blaze	blah-zay
blue	blyu	bloo
bona fide	bonafied	bo-na fi-de
brassiere	brah-zeer	brah-zyair
brewery	bu-er-y	broo-er-y
bronchial	{ bron-i-kal { brown-i-kal	bron-ki-al ( <i>o</i> as in <i>on</i> )
broom	brum	broom (rhymes with boom)

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
bureau	byu-ry	byu-row
burglar	bur-gu-lar	burg-lar
business	bus-i-ness	biz-ness
calliope	CAL-li-ope	cal-LI-o-pe
Calvary	Cav-al-ry	Cal-va-ry
can	kin	kan
carton	car-TOON	CAR-tn
cartoon	- - - -	car-TOON
celery	sal-a-ry	sel-er-y
cello	cel-lo	chel-lo ( <i>ch</i> as in <i>chair</i> )
cemetery	cim-e-ter-y	cem-e-ter-y
children	chil-dern	chil-dren
chimney	chim-ly	chim-ny
chiropodist	sha-rop-o-dist	ky-rop-o-dist
chrysanthemum	kris-an-the-um	kris-an-the-mum
circuit	sir-ku-it	sir-kit
clique	click	cleek
column	col-yum	col-um
communist	com-MU-nist	COM-mu-nist
community	q-mu-ni-ty	cum-mu-ni-ty ( <i>cum</i> sounds like <i>come</i> )
comptroller	comp-trol-ler	con-trol-ler
conduit	con-du-it	con-dit
contractor	CON-tract-or	con-TRAC-tor
conversant	con-VER-sant	CON-ver-sant
correspondent	cor-re-spon-dent	co-re-spon-dent ( <i>co</i> rhymes with <i>go</i> )
cornet	cor-o-net	cor-net
correspondent	co-re-spon-dent	cor-re-spon-dent

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
coupon	q-pon	coo-pon
cousin	cuz-int	cuz-in
creek	krick	kreek
culinary	cull-in-a-ry	q-lin-ar-y
cuticle	cut-i-cle	q-ti-cle
cyclamen	sigh-kla-men	sick-la-men
data	dat-ta	day-ta
daub	dab	dawb
deaf	deef	def (rhymes with f)
decadence	DEC-a-dence	de-KAY-dence
December	De-zem-ber	De-cem-ber
decorous	de-CHORUS	DEK-o-rus
detail	DE-tail	de-TAIL
dew	do	dyu
diamond	dy-mond	di-a-mond
didn't	dint	did-ent
diploma	die-plo-ma	dip-lo-ma
dirigible	di-RIDGE-i-ble	DIR-i-gi-ble
discern	dic-cern	di-zern
discretion	dis-kre-shun	dis-kresh-un ( <i>kresh</i> rhymes with <i>mesh</i> )
discutant	dis-kut-ant	dis-q-tant
distinctly	dis-tink-ly	dis-tinkt-ly
drawer	draw	drawr
drowned	drown-dead	dround
dues	doos	dyus
duke	dook	dyuke
duty	dooty	dyu-ty
education	ed-ju-ca-tion	ed-u-ca-tion
effect	uf-fect	ef-fect

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
eggs	aigs	egs (rhymes with <i>legs</i> )
electricity	e-lec-triz-i-ty	e-lec-tric-ity
elementary	al-i-men-ta-ry	el-e-men-ta-ry
elm	el-um	elm (one syllable)
Elmwood	El-um-wood	Elm-wood
encomium	en-co-ni-um	en-co-me-um
engine	en-jine	en-jin ( <i>i</i> as in <i>pin</i> )
envelope	on-va-lope	EN-vel-ope
environment	en-vi-rah-ment	en-vi-ron-ment
escalator	es-q-la-tor	es-ka-la-tor
evening	ev-en-ing	eve-ning
exactly	ex-ak-ly	ex-act-ly
executive	ex-ek-a-tive	ex-ek-you-tive
experiment	ex-spear-ment	ex-per-i-ment ( <i>per</i> rhymes with <i>her</i> )
exquisite	ex-QUIS-ite	EX-quis-ite
facsimile	fass-si-mile	fak-sim-i-le
familiar	far-mil-yar	fa-mil-yar
February	Feb-u-a-ry	Feb-ru-a-ry
fellow	fel-la	fel-low
fête	feet	fate
fiancé (man)	fie-ants	fee-ahn-say
fiancée (woman)	fie-ants	fee-ahn-say
figure	fig-ger	fig-yure
film	fill-um	film (one syllable)
finance	FIE-nants	fin-NANTS ( <i>fin</i> rhymes with <i>tin</i> )

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
financial	fie-nan-shal	fin-nan-shal ( <i>fin</i> rhymes with <i>tin</i> )
flute	flyute	floot
forbade	for-bayd	for-bad
forehead	fore-head	fahr-ed
formally	for-mer-ly	for-mal-ly
formerly	for-mal-ly	for-mer-ly
formidable	for-MID-a-bl	FOR-mid-a-bl
from	frum	frahm
gap (to yawn)	gap ( <i>a</i> as in <i>at</i> ) [ <i>Poor</i> ]	gahp or gape
geography	jog-ra-fy	ge-og-ra-fy
get	git	get
gifts	giffs	gifts
gist	gist	jist
glory	glaw-ry	glow-ry
gluten	glut-tn	gloo-tn
going	goin' and go-een	go-ing ( <i>ng</i> as in <i>ring</i> )
government	guv-er-ment	guv-ern-ment
gratis	grat-tis	gray-tis
grievous	greav-i-us	greav-us
grimace	GRIM-ace	grim-ACE
guarantee	gahr-an-tee	gar-an-tee
Guido	Gee-do	Gwe-do ( <i>o</i> as in <i>go</i> )
guitar	ga-tar	git-tar
gums	gooms	gums ( <i>gums</i> rhymes with <i>hums</i> )
half	haf ( <i>a</i> as in <i>damp</i> )	hahf ( <i>a</i> as in <i>ah</i> )

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
hallelujah	hal-le-lool-ya	hal-e-loo-ya
handkerchief	hand-ker-chief	hank-ker-chif
hang	hanguh	hang
	Foreigners should be careful to pronounce correctly final <i>ng</i> . See pages 261-264.	
heat	het	heet (rhymes with <i>meet</i> )
height	heighth	hite (rhymes with <i>mite</i> )
heinous	he-nus	hay-nus
heretic	he-RET-ic	HER-e-tic
hiccough	hik-cough	hik-kup
history	his-try	his-to-ry
hospitable	hos-PIT-a-ble	HOS-pit-a-ble
houses	how-ces	how-zes (rhymes with <i>rouses</i> )
hover	hahver	huver (rhymes with <i>cover</i> )
Huron	your-'n	Hew-ron
Hutchinson	Hutch-a-son	Hutch-in-son
hydrangea	hy-drain-ja	hy-drain-je-a
idea	i-dear	i-de-a
if	iv	if
impious	im-PIE-us	IMP-e-us
impostor	im-post-or	im-pahst-or
impotent	im-PO-tent	IM-po-tent
indefatigable	in-de-FATIGUE-a-bl	in-de-FAT-e-ga-bl
	You will not hear the word <i>fatigue</i> if you pronounce this word correctly.	

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
Indian	In-jun	Ind-di-an
indisputable	in-dis-PUTE-a-bl You will not hear the word <i>dispute</i> if you pronounce this word correctly.	in-DIS-pu-ta-bl
inexplicable	in-ex-PLICK-a-bl	in-EX-plic-a-bl
influence	in-FLU-ents	IN-flu-ents
ingenious	Do not confuse these two words.	in-JEAN-yus
ingenuous		in-JEN-u-us ( <i>jen</i> rhymes with <i>hen</i> )
inquiry	IN-qua-ry If you are pronouncing this word correctly you will hear the word <i>inquire</i> .	in-QUIR-y
instead	in-stid	in-sted
instincts	in-stinks	in-stinkts
interests	in-ter-es	in-ter-ests
intricate	in-TRICK-et	IN-tri-cut
invariably	in-var-a-bly	in-va-ri-a-bly
iodoform	i-o-do-foam	i-o-do-form
iron	i-run	i-ern
irrefragable	ir-re-FRAG-a-bl	ir-REF-ra-ja-bl
irrelevance	ir-rev-e-lance	ir-rel-e-vance
irrelevant	ir-rev-e-lant	ir-rel-e-vant
irrevokable	ir-re-VOK-a-bl	ir-REV-o-ka-bl
Israel	Iz-re-el	Iz-rah-el
Italian	eye-tal-yan	It-al-yan
italics	eye-tal-ics	it-al-ics
itinerary	i-tin-er-y	i-tin-er-a-ry
January	Jen-u-a-ry	Jan-u-a-ry
Johns Hopkins	John Hopkins	Johns Hopkins
jugular	jug-u-lar	Jew-gu-lar
just	jest	just

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
kept	kep	kept
kerchief	ker-chief	ker-chif
kerosene	ker-o-SENE	KER-o-sene
khaki	cack-e	cah-ke (a as in ah)
kindergarten	kinder-garden	kinder-garten
knew	noo	nyu
Ku-Klux	Klu-Klux	Kyu-Klux
laboratory	lava-to-ry	lab-o-ra-to-ry
lamentable	la-MENT-a-bl	LAM-en-ta-bl
larynx	lar-nicks	lar-inks (a as in at)
laugh	laff	lahf (a as in ah)
lava	lav-a	lah-va (a as in ah)
lavatory	lab-ra-to-ry	lav-a-to-ry
learned (a learned man)	learnd	learn-ed
leave of absence	leaf of absence	leave of absence
left	leff	left
length	lenth	length
library	li-ber-ry	li-bra-ry
licorice	lick-o-rish	lick-o-riss
lifts	liffs	lifts
lingerie	law-zher-ie	lan-zher-ie (a as in an)
luxury	lugs-u-ry	lucks-u-ry
machinations	mash-in-a-shuns	mak-in-a-shuns
maintenance	main-TAIN-ance	MAIN-ten-ance
marabou	mar-a-bow	mar-a-boo

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
maratime	mar-a-time	mar-a-tim
massacred	mas-sa-creed	mas-sa-kerd
massacring	mas-sa-ker-ing	mas-sa-kring
mausoleum	maw-SO-le-um	maw-so-LE-um
mayonnaise	my-o-naze	may-o-naze
mischievous	mis-CHIEV-i-ous	MIS-chiv-us
misled	my-zeld	miss-led
municipal	mew-ni-SIP-pl	mew-NIS-i-pl
museum	MEW-se-um	mu-SE-um
mush-room	mush-roon	mush-room
nasturtium	nastur-tion	nas-tur-tium
neuralgia	noo-ral-a-gy	nyu-ral-ge-a
new	noo	nyu
New Orleans	Noo Or-LEE-ans	Nyu-OR-le-ans
Niagara	Ni-ag-ra	Ni-ag-a-ra
Northampton	North-hampton	North-amp-ton
nucleus	noo-cle-us	nyu-cle-us
nude	nood	nyude
obesity	o-bee-si-ty	o-bess-i-ty
oleomargarine	o-le-o-mar-ja-reen	o-le-o-mar-ga-reen (g as in <i>Margaret</i> )
panacea	pa-NASS-e-a	pan-a-SEE-a
pantomime	pan-to-mine	pan-to-mime
paprika	pap-REE-ka	POP-ree-ka
Parliament	Parl-ya-ment	Par-li-ment
partition	pa-ti-tion	par-ti-tion
partner	pard-ner	part-ner
pedestal	pe-DES-tl	PED-es-tl
peony	pie-nee	PEE-o-ny
percolator	per-q-la-tor	per-ko-la-tor
perspiration	pres-pi-ra-tion	per-spi-ra-tion

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
perspire	pres-pi-er	per-spi-er
petition	par-ti-tion	pe-ti-tion
petticoat	ped-di-coat	pet-ti-coat
Phillips Brooks	<i>Phillip</i> Brooks	<i>Phillips</i> Brooks
photograph	for-to-graph	fo-to-graf
picture	pitch-er	pik-ture
Pilgrims	Pil-grums	Pil-grims
pimento	pa-men-to	pim-en-to
pistachio	pis-tash-eo	pis-tay-she-o or pis-tah-she-o
plover	plah-ver	pluv-er (rhymes with <i>lover</i> )
poem	pome	po-em
poinsettia	poin-set-ta	poin-set-te-a
pompon	pom-pom	pom-pon
preferable	pre-FER-a-bl	PREF-er-a-bl
Presbyterian	Prez-pa-ter-e-an	Prez-ba-ter-e-an
prescription	per-scrip-tion	pre-scrip-tion
presentation	pree-zen-ta-tion	prez-en-ta-tion
probably	prob-a-ly	prob-a-bly
prohibition	pro-ib-i-shun	pro-hib-i-shun
pronunciation	{ per-nun-ci-a-tion pro-noun-ci-a-tion	<i>pro-nun-ci-a-tion</i>
pumpkin	punk-in	pump-kin
quart	kort	kwart
quarter	korter	kwart-er
quay	kway	kee
radish	reddish	rad-ish
raspberry	raws-berry	raz-berry ( <i>a</i> as in <i>at</i> )
really	ree-ly	re-al-ly

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
recognize	rek-a-nize	rek-og-nize
refectory	re-frak-to-ry	re-fek-to-ry
regardless	ir-re-gard-less	re-gard-less
renascent	re-nay-cent	re-NASS-ent
repast	RE-past	re-PAST
retinue	ret-in-oo	ret-in-you
rheum		<i>Rheum</i> rhymes with <i>boom</i> .
rheumatics	The first syllable rhymes with <i>who</i> .	roo-mat-iks
rheumatism	The first syllable rhymes with <i>who</i> .	roo-ma-tism
rid	red	rid
ring	ringk	ring
	If you are a foreigner, ask an educated American to pronounce for you a few of the words ending with <i>ng</i> ; <i>ring</i> , <i>sing</i> , <i>among</i> , <i>bring</i> , etc. See pages 261-264.	
rinse	rense and wrench	rints
Robinson	Rob-a-son	Rob-in-son
robust	ROW-bust	row-BUST
romance	ROW-mants	row-MANTS
room	<i>Room</i> rhymes with <i>boom</i> .	
Roosevelt	Rews-velt	Rose-a-velt
	Some authorities favor slighting the first <i>e</i> in <i>Roosevelt</i> , making the word sound almost like <i>Rose-velt</i> .	
root	<i>Root</i> rhymes with <i>boot</i> .	
route	rout	root (rhymes with <i>boot</i> )
sacrilegious	sak-re-lij-us	sak-ri-lee-jus
said	sayd	sed

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
says	saiz	sez
secretary	{ sek-a-ter-ry sec-u-ter-ry	sek-re-ter-ry
secretive	SEE-cre-tive	se-KREE-tiv
sergeant	sur-jent	sar-jent
similar	sim-u-lar	sim-i-lar
sleek	slick	sleak
slept	slepp	slept
soot	sut	soot (rhymes with <i>boot</i> )
soprano	so-pran-no	so-prah-no
Southampton	South-hampton	South-amp-ton
statue	stat-yute	stat-you
status	statt-us	stay-tus
steady	stid-dy	sted-dy
stew	stoo	styu
stomach	stom-ik	stom-uk
strength	strenth	strength ( <i>ng</i> as in <i>ring</i> )
student	stoo-dent	styu-dent
study	{ sted-dy stid-dy	stud-y
substitute	sub-sti-toot	sub-sti-tyute
suggest	sud-jest	sug-jest ( <i>sug</i> rhymes with <i>rug</i> )
suggestion	sud-jest-shun	sug-jest-chun ( <i>sug</i> rhymes with <i>rug</i> )
suggestive	sud-jes-tive	sug-jes-tive ( <i>sug</i> rhymes with <i>rug</i> )
suit	soot	syute

# How to Avoid Them

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
suite	soot	sweet
superfluous	{ su-per-FLOO-us su-per-fa-lus	syu-PER-floo-us
surprise	sup-prize	sur-prize
swept	swep	swept
swollen	swullen	swo-len (o as in go)
tassel	taw-sel	tass-el
telephone	tel-e-fome	tel-e-fone
tenet	tea-net	ten-et
theater	the-AY-ter	THE-a-ter
tiny	tee-ny	ti-ny (i as in pie)
tomato	to-mat-o	{ to-may-to to-mah-to
Tuesday	Toosday	Tyusday
tulip	too-lip	tyu-lip
turgid	tur-gid	tur-jid
ty	twen-dy	twen-ty
(as in <i>twenty</i> , <i>thirty</i> , etc.)		
unkempt	un-kept	un-kempt
unless	onless	un-less
until	on-til	un-til
used	ust	youzd
usually	you-zhal-ly	you-zhu-al-ly
utensil	u-tin-sil	u-ten-sil
valet	<i>Val-et</i> is used now in preference to <i>val-ay</i> .	
variegated	var-i-ga-ted	var-i-a-ga-ted
vaudeville	vaw-da-ville	vod-vill (o as in go)

# Pitfalls in English

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
version	ver-zion	ver-shun
viaduct	vi-a-dock	vi-a-dukt
vice versa	vice ver-sa	vi-sa ver-sa
Victrola	Vik-tor-o-la	Vik-tro-la
victuals	vik-tu-als	vit-tls
violet	vi-let	vi-o-let
violoncello	vi-o-lin-chel-lo	ve-o-long-chel-lo (see <i>cello</i> )
visor	vizz-or	vy-zr ( <i>y</i> as in <i>my</i> )
vitals	vit-tls	vy-tls ( <i>y</i> as in <i>my</i> )
washed	warsh-t	wahsht
Wednesday	Wed-ens-day	Wens-day
Westminster	West-min-is-ter	West-min-ster
whole	hull	hole
wistaria	wis-teer-i-a	wis-tair-i-a
xylophone	zill-o-fone	zie-lo-fone ( <i>zie</i> rhymes with <i>pie</i> )
yea	yee	yay (rhymes with <i>pay</i> )
yeast	east	yeast
yellow	yel-la	yel-low
yonder	yun-der	yahn-der
zinc	sink	zink
zither	zit-ter	zith-er
zoölogical	zoo-log-i-cal	zo-o-log-i-cal (first <i>o</i> as in <i>toe</i> )
zoölogy	zoo-ol-o-gy	zo-ol-o-gy (first <i>o</i> as in <i>toe</i> )

# How to Avoid Them

## ING—TH—WH

If you were not born in America, if you are of foreign parentage, even though born in America, or if you associate much with foreigners, carefully

### READ THE FOLLOWING:

Do not take it for granted just because you have received a good education in your own country or have gone to a high school or a college in this country, that you are pronouncing your words correctly. Long words easily divided into small syllables are less likely to be mispronounced than short words having certain combinations of which you should beware.

### PAY ESPECIAL ATTENTION TO

1. words containing *ing—going*
2. words containing *th—this*
3. words containing *wh—what*

Perhaps you do not know that you are having trouble with such words. Your friends are too polite to tell you of your incorrect pronunciation which, by the way, may be hampering you in both the business and the social world.

### POINT 1

#### ING

Why should words with *ing* offer any difficulty? Because in the conscientious effort of

## Pitfalls in English

your teachers to force you to pronounce *ing*, too much was made of *g*. The result is that many of you say *think* for *thing*, *ringk* for *ring*, etc.

In order to correct this difficulty other teachers with the best of intention have, in eliminating the sound of *g* at the end of these words, permitted you to say *goeen* for *going*, *comeen* for *coming*, *walkeen* for *walking*. This error of pronunciation is just as bad as the other.

*Going* is not *go-eeen*; it is not *go-ingk*. It is *go-ing*.

Do not omit the *g* as in *go-eeen*.

Do not pronounce *g* following *n* (*thing*) as you pronounce final *g* without *n* (*flag*).

Try this device: Ignore the *g*. Think of the *ng* together as one sound. In pronouncing a word that contains *ing* (middle or final) allow the tongue to hit the roof of the forward part of the mouth. Hold it there to prevent its assistance in uttering the additional sound of *k* which you are trying to eliminate. If you allow the tongue to drop before you have finished the word, you will find it difficult to correct your error. Those who have no trouble with these words, of course, need not resort to this device.

Test: Put your thumb and first finger to your throat when practicing a word

## How to Avoid Them

with *ing*. If you feel a jerk, you are saying it wrong; if you do not, you are more than likely correct.

The one way to be sure that you are pronouncing these words correctly is to ask someone who speaks well to listen, by standing very close to you. He will tell you if he hears that unpleasant *guh*. If he does, eliminate it as soon as possible.

Pronounce these words daily very slowly and attentively until you have mastered the difficulty:

king	going
ring	coming
sing	jumping
bring	ringing
sling	running
thing	walking
dusting	swimming
cleaning	diving
practicing	floating
arguing	sleeping
discussing	dreaming
dressing	eating
undressing	drinking
drilling	writing
marching	reading
washing	spelling

# Pitfalls in English

bathing	studying
brushing	cooking
shining	sewing
obeying	knitting
disobeying	darning
tearing	mending
cutting	basting
typing	advertising
dancing	fring
acting	lighting
rehearsing	making
looking	baking
hearing	cooking
seeing	frying
tasting	boiling
smelling	broiling
touching	stewing (sty-u-ing)
feeling	steaming
driving	simmering
riding	sweeping
doing	scrubbing

among us (not among gus)

## POINT 2

### TH

Many of you say, "I simply cannot pronounce words with *th*." You say *dis* for *this*, *dat* for

## How to Avoid Them

*that*, *mudder* for *mother*, and through these errors mar your speech which may be otherwise correct.

For you there is this device. Every time you come to a word with *th* at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end, put your tongue between the teeth and out beyond the lips (way out so that you can see it when you stand before a mirror) at the moment of pronouncing the *th*. In other words, stick your tongue out.

### ILLUSTRATION

mother (pronounced muth-er)

muth (tongue out) er

Pronounce each one of the following several times every day until the words come from you correctly pronounced without the least bit of effort or special thought. Only then can you feel sure that you will never incorrectly pronounce them.

the	theirs	throw	thine	thrill
this	them	threw	thee	thigh
that	there	throwing	thorn	thread
these	either	thrown	thorough	threat
those	neither	thrash	mother	thick
with	other	thresh	father	thin
whither	another	thresher	brother	though
whether	bother	thimble	throng	through
weather	scathing	thunder	throne	thought
their	mouth	thy	thong	think

# Pitfalls in English

## POINT 3

### WH

Americans and foreigners alike mispronounce words with *wh*. They say *wat* for *what*, *wen* for *when*, *witch* for *which*, *wile* for *while*.

### DEVICE

Put the lips into the position for blowing out a candle. Then gently blow as you utter these words containing *wh*. If you will, when practicing, put your hand in front of the mouth you will feel the breath. You will then know that you are saying the *wh* correctly.

All of the words recorded below are correct. The point to be careful about is this: When you are pronouncing a word in column 1 pronounce the *wh* with care; when you are pronouncing a word in column 2 omit the breathy quality.

1	2	1	2
what	watt	whack	wack
which	witch	white	wight
where	wear	when	wen
why	y	wheel	weal
why	weigh or way	whig	wig
whit	wit	whether	weather
whist	wist	whirled	world
whale	wale	whither	wither
whoa	woe	whittle	wittle

## How to Avoid Them

Where does Mr. Wistle, the whistler, live?  
Have you heard him whistle?

### LETTERS

The subject of business letters and formal and informal correspondence is interesting. In a small volume it is not possible to deal adequately with it; but if you will read carefully what is said here on the subject, perhaps your interest will be sufficiently aroused to cause you to seek further information. Go to your public library, ask for books on business and social correspondence, take notes, and put into practice the valuable suggestions which you find. It is possible to make your letters so interesting and attractive that your friends and business correspondents will deem it a pleasure to receive them.

### MATERIAL HINTS and HINTS ON MATERIAL

Use the best stationery that you can afford. Cheap stationery causes the point of the pen to stick, and spattering of ink results; it sometimes absorbs the ink almost as does a sheet of blotting paper, causing a spreading which detracts from the appearance of the sheet. Good stationery enables the pen to glide over the surface and the penmanship becomes attractive.

## Pitfalls in English

Use white stationery. Highly colored stationery is not considered in good taste. Cream and gray also may safely be used.

Never use ruled stationery. If you cannot write straight on unruled paper, use a black lined sheet under your writing paper to assist you. This, however, causes your penmanship to look stiff, makes it appear that it is a laborious task for you to write, and somewhat mars the pleasure of the reader. The best thing to do—AND IT IS POSSIBLE—is to learn to write straight.

### SUGGESTION

If your writing persists in going up hill, you can correct the difficulty by bringing the down strokes of each letter a little farther down than you have previously thought they should be brought. If you have always thought that you were writing straight, the fact that the writing was uphill after you had finished indicates that you did not come down far enough each time.

### ILLUSTRATION

*I try to write well.*

*I try to write well.*

## How to Avoid Them

If you are using ordinary note paper (that which comes folded once, making four pages) for a short letter, write on pages one and three. If you are going to use the four pages, the best authorities tell you to write on page one, then two, then three, then four. So many careful persons use page one, then three, then two, then four, that it seems permissible to follow their example if one so desires.

The envelope should correspond to the paper in size, color, and quality. The paper should be folded neatly and correctly to fit the envelope. For social correspondence it is not correct to use the stamped envelope furnished by the United States government, even though the paper might correspond to it in every particular. Envelopes of unusual shapes are not in good taste even though the paper can be folded exactly to fit.

Black ink is the best to use. Never use red, green, or purple ink. Do not write with a lead-pencil. Fountain pens are inexpensive and dependable; there is no excuse for a letter written in pencil. Apologizing for the use of pencil only aggravates the offense because the apology shows that you are conscious of a violation of a rule of etiquette. It is as rude as reaching across your neighbor at table and saying, "Excuse me."

## Pitfalls in English

Try many kinds of pen points. Decide upon the one with which you have the best results. Have a supply on hand in order that you need never write with a poor pen point. (Pen points are cheaper when bought by the box.) If you use a fountain pen try the various points before purchasing.

Never take the liberty of scribbling to your family and other intimates. They are entitled to your best efforts.

Do not apologize for poor penmanship. "A poor pen" is a poor excuse. Write your best and make no comment.

There should be no erasures, no corrections, no insertions, and no postscripts. Even one erasure makes a letter untidy. You will be amply repaid for the little extra trouble of copying a letter if you should be unfortunate enough to blot or make a mistake. Get the reputation of sending out well-groomed letters and cherish it.

If you do not use a blotter, your letter will look just a little nicer than if you do. The writing will stand out perkily as if proud to represent you.

Underlining spoils the appearance of your letter. Do not underline. Form the habit of so wording your letters that the reader will understand the remarks and place the emphasis upon

## How to Avoid Them

the proper words. Underlining is considered an insult to the intelligence of the reader. To underline is to acknowledge your inability to express yourself clearly.

If you care about the appearance of your letter, you must see that it occupies the center of the paper. Observe the following letters. You will see that the right hand margins and the left hand margins are about equal in width. Of course it is difficult to keep the right hand margin even (the lines finishing one under the other), but a little care in your choice of words will give you the reward you seek. There may be a little wider space under the signature than there is at the top above the heading. The point to avoid is writing a very short letter of perhaps two or three lines near the top of the paper and having several inches blank at the bottom.

Here is the correct way to lay out a short letter on a page or on a correspondence card.

# Pitfalls in English

CENTER YOUR LETTER.

42 Oak Street  
Augusta, Maine  
June 1, 1928

Dear Bess,

Come right along! We've plenty of  
room for you and the babies.

Yours lovingly,  
Katherine

## A FORM INDICATING INTIMACY

12 Oak Avenue  
Lima, Ohio  
June 6, 1928

My dear Mollie:

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Affectionately yours,  
Bertha Rock

## How to Avoid Them

THIS FORM DOES NOT BESPEAK INTIMACY.

Hotel Onondaga  
Syracuse, New York  
July 8, 1928

My dear Mrs. Pisa:

Most sincerely yours,  
Harriet Childs

To Mrs. S. Pisa  
78 Riverside Drive  
New York, New York

## Pitfalls in English

THIS IS A CORRECT FORMAL LETTER, THOUGH  
THE FORM IS NOT SO POPULAR AS IT ONCE WAS.

The Buckingham  
123 Mariner Street  
Buffalo, New York  
November 1, 1928

Miss Lena Child  
Hotel Biltmore  
New York, New York

Dear Madam:

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Very truly yours,  
Ray R. Mark

# How to Avoid Them

## BUSINESS FORM FROM A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL TO A FIRM

65 Madison Avenue,  
New York, N. Y.,  
January 4, 1928.

Chicago Bargain House,  
Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Very truly yours,  
John Halliday.

This is an example of close punctuation. Notice that the punctuation is consistent throughout. Open punctuation would be correct. The point to remember is to be consistent throughout the letter. If you favor close punctuation, be sure to use the marks required. If you favor open punctuation, omit punctuation marks where it is permissible to omit them.

For details about close punctuation, see pages 298, 299, 304.

# Pitfalls in English

City of New York  
Department of Public Instruction

September 6, 1928

Denton, Cottier & Daniels  
Court and Pearl Streets  
Buffalo, N Y

Gentlemen:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Very truly yours,  
John Lee,  
Secretary

This sheet is a letter head. Since it is from the department of education, the writer is particularly careful to employ the latest method of arrangement and punctuation.

He is using open punctuation. There is no period after 1928. He is careful to write the firm's name as it appears on the firm's letter-

## How to Avoid Them

head. Notice the comma between the city and the state.

For details about open punctuation, see pages 298, 299, 304, 305.

BALANCED FORM

BUSINESS ONLY

Mr. William Bergman  
699 Linwood Avenue  
Buffalo, N Y

65 Day's Park  
Albany, N Y  
April 12, 1928

My dear Mr. Bergman:

Very truly yours,  
Gustave Neville

*Dear Sir* would have been correct in this letter. The writer is acquainted with Mr. Bergman; therefore he has used the name in the salutation. It is more cordial and friendly to mention the name. In writing to a person whom

## Pitfalls in English

you do not know it is better to say *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam* unless you are very sure that to mention the name will not offend.

### FORM

Form as applied to letter writing means the orderly arrangement of the parts of a letter.

#### PARTS OF A LETTER

heading

introduction

salutation

body

complimentary close

signature

Certain arrangements are considered correct; others are incorrect.

# How to Avoid Them

## CORRECT INFORMAL NOTE

a 12 Orchard Place  
b Boston, Massachusetts  
c December 31, 1928

d My dear Cecil:

e           The most delightful thing has happened to us! John's parents have bought us a beautiful bungalow in Nantucket, not more than two blocks from your home. We expect to move very soon and have already begun to pack. Can you imagine my state of mind?

e           When you come to town Wednesday, will you please drive over to see us? I can hardly wait to tell you how it all happened. Do come prepared to stay over night. This will be your last visit to our dear little cottage in which we have so many times enjoyed your delightful company.

f Affectionately yours,  
g                   Sophie

## Pitfalls in English

Though the preceding note is written to an intimate friend, it is written carefully and with attention to details.

NOTICE { that the address of the writer is included (a and b).  
that lines a and b are not finished with a comma.  
that line c is not finished with a period.  
the comma between the city and the state (b).  
the comma between the day of the month and the year (c).  
that there are no abbreviations (a, b, and c).  
that there is no *st* after 31 (c).

Because the letter is written to an intimate friend, the introduction has been omitted. Had the introduction been included, it would have been like either of the following:

MISS CECIL ERWINE

12 Quince Street

Nantucket, Massachusetts

MISS CECIL ERWINE

12 Quince Street

Nantucket

Massachusetts

The introduction in this letter would have appeared at the left side of the sheet, a little below the heading, which is, as you see, on the right side.

## How to Avoid Them

The salutation (d), *Dear Cecil*, might have been used instead of *My dear Cecil*. Strange as it may seem, the use of *My* makes the salutation less intimate in a friendly letter than the salutation without *My*; but many persons feel that the sense of proprietorship expressed by the word *My* makes the salutation in a letter to a friend more affectionate. The matter resolves itself into one of personal opinion, and in the case of letters to friends is not of great importance.

### BUT

whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not, whether you follow the instruction or not, in a business letter and in a formal social letter, remember:

My dear Mrs. Brown  
is more formal than

Dear Mrs. Brown

My dear Mr. Gordon  
is more formal than

Dear Mr. Gordon

My dear Miss Gilman  
is more formal than

Dear Miss Gilman

## Pitfalls in English

My dear Dr. Frye  
is more formal than

Dear Dr. Frye

My dear Father Walsh  
is more formal than

Dear Father Walsh

My dear Rabbi Kopald  
is more formal than

Dear Rabbi Kopald

A young woman having occasion to write to  
her employer writes:

My dear Mr. Daniels

A woman patient writing to her doctor must  
be careful to write:

My dear Dr. Wende

A person writing to a judge writes:

My dear Judge Harris

A member of a church writes to his minister:

My dear Dr. Boynton

My dear Father Ahern

My dear Rabbi Fink

However friendly you may feel with these  
august personages, you show respect to their  
positions, you dignify yourself, and you show

## How to Avoid Them

that you are aware of the correct way to address them in observing this little detail. If you adopt this form you will never offend; while if you omit the word *My* you may or may not offend, depending upon the indulgence and the temperament of the one to whom you are writing. In other words, *My* is always correct, while at times, to omit *My* is incorrect.

A woman in writing to a man should be particularly careful to observe this rule.

Notice that *dear* is begun with a small letter.

Had *dear* been the first word of the salutation, it would have been written with a capital. *Dear Cecil.*

Had the salutation been *My Dear* without the word *Cecil*, *Dear* would have been written with a capital. Omitting the name, however, is not particularly good form.

The mark after the salutation in social letters may be a colon or a comma. (In business letters use a colon.) Do not use a dash in the salutation.

### *Wrong*

Dear Miriam:—

Dear Miriam,—

Dear Miriam—

### *Right*

Dear Miriam:

Dear Miriam,

Now we come to the body of the letter. Notice that the first word of each paragraph is

## Pitfalls in English

indented (e). *The* and *When* are written under the word *Cecil*. All the other first words of each line begin a quarter of an inch from the edge of the paper.

Notice that all the sentences in the first paragraph relate to the happiness over the purchase of the bungalow and all in the second relate to the plans for the visit.

Notice that the space between the two paragraphs is wider than the space between the lines.

The complimentary close is used without a useless expression to lead up to it. You do not see, preceding (f):

Hoping that we shall see you soon, I remain  
Trusting that you will come, I am  
Thanking you in advance for the pleasure  
    which your visit will give us  
Hoping that you are all well

Notice that a comma follows the complimentary close (f).

Other complimentary endings which might have been used are:

Lovingly yours  
Devotedly yours  
Your sincere friend  
Sincerely yours  
Cordially yours

## How to Avoid Them

Depending upon the closeness of the friendship and your mood when writing, you will make your selection.

Write your signature plainly. Use initials sparingly. Do not place a period after your signature. (This is a matter of opinion.)

### *Poor*

H. Rodgers.

Ed. Fêtes.

A. J. Wiggins.

M. L. Danahy.

J. F. Huber.

### *Good*

Helen Rodgers

Edna Fêtes

Alta J. Wiggins

M. Louise Danahy

John F. Huber

## CONTENTS

It is not incorrect as many suppose to begin your letter or any paragraph with *I*. If you are writing to a friend, he is undoubtedly interested in you and you are correct if you begin with *I*. It is polite to be interested in your friend, and beginning a letter or a paragraph with *you* is one way of showing that interest. With the last letter received lying before you, you show your interest in your correspondent if you reply to the contents which relate to the writer before attacking your own personal affairs. In this way the word *you* will often be used and you will not be considered a self-centered correspondent.

## Pitfalls in English

Do not begin your letter with excuses about how busy you have been.

Do not make any excuse for writing your letter.

### ILLUSTRATION

*Poor* { Having a few moments to spare,  
While waiting for the soup to boil,  
As I have no work just now that must  
be done,  
It's a rainy day and as I have to stay  
in the house, I thought I'd write.

Plunge at once into what you have to say. Write what you think will interest your friend. As you are about to write what you cooked for dinner on the maid's day out, or how you made the points of the lace curtains meet when you hung them for the wedding, or how you prepare codfish, ask yourself, "Should I be interested in this if Mary were writing it to me?" You will become a discriminating censor. However, an incident which would not interest you may sometimes be of interest to the person to whom you are writing; in such a case, of course, include it in your letter.

Unless you are writing to an intimate friend who, you are sure, is deeply interested in your health and who would want to know the truth

## How to Avoid Them

about your physical condition, do not give detailed and graphic accounts of your ailments. Tell your troubles to your doctor. He is paid to listen and does so cheerfully. Do not write all your domestic or business difficulties to your friend unless your friendship is of the kind that permits this confidence. Write in the same spontaneous manner in which you talk.

Do not write long and tedious descriptions of scenery which you have enjoyed in your travels. Picturesque folders of all sections of the world may be picked up free of charge from the counters of the local travel bureaus. They will probably be far more interesting than any literary efforts of your creation. Your friend wishes to hear about you; not about mountains. There may be an exception; I have yet to meet him.

Try to write entertainingly but do not laugh on paper at your own jokes by putting in "ha, ha" after a humorous remark. Tax your ingenuity to such an extent that your humor will be observed without a label.

The point to remember is: Give every letter thought. Do not prolong the letter for the sake of filling up the last page.

Do not give a reason for closing your letter. When you have said all you have to say, stop.

# Pitfalls in English

## ILLUSTRATION

### *Poor*

Well, Mary, I guess I'll have to stop now.  
Dinner is ready.

There is no more news, so I'll close.

As John is waiting for me to go out with him,  
I'll say good-bye.

## BUSINESS LETTERS

It would seem by this time, after so much has been written in various books about the desirability of the warm tone of a business letter, that it would be impossible to find anyone who would dictate such an uninteresting opening sentence as

“Yours of the sixteenth received and contents noted.”

The one to whom you are writing knows that his letter was received because of the fact that you are answering it. Why say that the contents were noted? Very few persons receive mail and then neglect to read it.

The first sentence in your letter is the most important one. It introduces you to the one to whom you are writing. If your first sentence is weak or lacking in heartiness, it is as though you approached a person in that fashion.

## How to Avoid Them

Your first sentence should contain the date of the letter which you are answering and in addition some pleasing or important fact.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR OPENING SENTENCES

1. We wish to thank you for your frankness in bringing to our attention, through your note of April 4, the unsatisfactory condition —
2. I am pleased to read in your letter of April 1 —
3. Your frank note of May 14 will certainly be the means of correcting gross injustice.
4. From your letter of June 23, it is evident that you will be better pleased if we —
5. Your justifiable complaint as stated in your letter of December 3 has been referred to our adjustment department. We shall do all in our power to —

Notice that every opening sentence contains the date of the letter to which reply is being made.

Use many different openings. Do not get into the habit of writing similar opening sentences in all your letters.

Do not lead up to the complimentary close by such expressions as

## Pitfalls in English

*Hoping* to hear from you soon  
*Trusting* that you are all well  
*Expecting* to hear from you soon again  
*Wishing* you a merry Christmas  
*Sending* you heartiest congratulations

If you wish to express these sentiments,

Say: { I hope to hear from you soon.  
I trust that you are all well.  
I shall expect to hear from you soon.  
I wish you a merry Christmas.  
I send you heartiest congratulations.

### ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING SENTENCES

1. We shall be grateful for a reply before Monday, May 2.
2. It will please us to favor you again.
3. We shall expect to hear from you definitely by May 8.
4. We feel that we can depend upon you to attend to this matter promptly; you certainly are as anxious as we are to have this a closed incident.
5. May we hear from you soon?
6. Will you write us again should you not feel satisfied with this explanation?
7. Will you write us again should this explanation seem inadequate?

## How to Avoid Them

8. Are you convinced now, Mr. Polk, that we have dealt fairly with you?
9. We have tried hard to win your confidence and we wish, if possible, to keep it.

### REMEMBER

that the tone of the last sentence depends upon the purpose and content of the letter. Think what you would be likely to say in your parting sentence just before "Good-bye" if you were talking face to face. Use some such worth while sentence as your closing remark and then finish with the customary, "Very truly yours," and your signature.

### ILLUSTRATION

#### *Weak*

Hoping that you will never again conclude a letter with a sentence beginning with an *ing* word, I am

Very truly yours,

#### *Strong*

I hope that you will never again conclude a letter with a sentence beginning with an *ing* word.

Very truly yours,

## Pitfalls in English

The following signatures show how persons in various conditions of life sign letters.

1.                               Very sincerely yours,  
   (Miss) ALSA PARTRIDGE
2.                               Very truly yours,  
   MYRTLE BAKER
3.                               Very cordially yours,  
   POLLY LEWIS  
                             (Mrs. Mack Lewis)
4.                               Affectionately yours,  
   LENA LEE  
                             (Mrs. Julius Lee)
5.                               Sincerely yours,  
   SOPHIE L. BLAKESLEE  
                             (Mrs. Sophie L. Blakeslee)

*Very sincerely yours, Sincerely yours, Very cordially yours, Cordially yours, Very truly yours, Affectionately yours,* and many other expressions according to the degree of acquaintance, friendship, and intimacy may be used for the complimentary close.

### EXPLANATION

The signature of Number 1 is that of an un-

## How to Avoid Them

married woman. She is writing to you, a person who does not know her. She has signed her name in full to show you how she expects you to write it upon the envelope when you reply. She has indicated that she is single and by inclosing the word *Miss* in parenthesis she has shown that she knows that she should never use the word *Miss* with her signature. She is putting it there for your benefit only. If she were writing to a person who knew that she was single she would not put the *Miss* in the letter, even in parenthesis.

In Number 2 Myrtle Baker is writing to a person who does not know her; she has omitted *Miss* in parenthesis because she does not like the use of it. She knows that the person in replying will take it for granted that she is single since she gave no evidence of being married. (If you are unmarried choose between Numbers 1 and 2.)

In Number 3 Mrs. Mack Lewis has signed her Christian name, *Polly* Lewis. In the left hand corner she has shown that she wishes the reply to be addressed to Mrs. Mack (her husband's Christian name) Lewis.

In Number 4 a widow is writing the letter. She has signed her name and at the left she has given her deceased husband's name (Julius) so that you may know how to address her.

## Pitfalls in English

In Number 5 a widow is writing the letter. For some reason she does not care to be known as the widow of George Blakeslee. Perhaps her reason is merely that she is old-fashioned and clings to the old idea that when a husband dies the widow uses her Christian name. She therefore signs herself at the left, Mrs. Sophie L. Blakeslee in parenthesis. This form is rapidly going out. Most widows prefer to retain their deceased husband's Christian name.

A married woman never signs her name *Mrs.*

{	husband's Christian name	}	and surname under
	or		the complimentary
	her own Christian name		close.

If she uses her husband's Christian name at all, it is put at the left as in Numbers 3 and 4.

To intimate friends, she omits this, and signs her own Christian name with or without her husband's surname.

Her friends, in replying, address the envelope to Mrs. ——— (husband's full name).

A man in signing a letter omits *Mr.*

### GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS LETTERS

Address a single or a  
married woman      *Dear Madam*

## How to Avoid Them

Address a man whom  
you have not met (or  
even if you have met  
him and know him  
slightly in a business  
way)

*Dear Sir*

Address a firm of men *Gentlemen*

(Avoid: *Dear Sirs*)

Address a firm of  
women

*Mesdames* (pronounced  
or *May-dahm*)  
*Ladies*

If you object to the words *Mesdames* and *Ladies*, there is no reason why you should not consult your own feeling in the matter. If your letter is otherwise correct and in good form, you might take the liberty of originating your own salutation and use, perhaps, *Women*.

Address a firm of both sexes	{	Gentlemen and Madam (if one woman).
		Gentlemen and Mesdames (if more than one woman).
		Dear Sir and Madam (one of each).
		Dear Sir and Mesdames (one man and some women).
		Dear Sir and Ladies (one man and some women).

## Pitfalls in English

If you are not really supposed to know that the firm contains women and you do not like these cumbersome salutations, write *Gentlemen*.

Unless you have met the person to whom you are writing, it is better not to use the name of the person in the salutation. *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam* is preferable. This suggestion need not always be followed.

Always spell the name of your correspondent exactly as he or she spells it. This applies also to firm names. If the firm uses &, you should use it. If *and* appears in the firm name, you should use it. If the firm uses *Co.*, you should use it. If *Company* is used, you should use it. If your correspondent has an initial, use it in your letter to him.

Do not use *Friend John* or *Dear Friend* as salutations.

*Dear John*

or

*My dear John*

In writing a business letter never use both sides of the paper.

Do not use the word *to* in addressing the envelope or in writing the introduction in the letter.

*Wrong:* To Miss Maud Irving.

*Right:* Miss Maud Irving.

## How to Avoid Them

Do not use such signs as

- # for number
- / to separate the parts of the date
- ' to show the omission of the first two figures of the year
- st* for the first day of the month
- nd* for the second
- rd* for the third
- th* for the fourth

### *Wrong*

#76 Park Avenue  
6/10/'28  
6/10, 1928  
June 10, '28  
June 1st, 1928  
June 2nd, 1928  
June 3rd, 1928  
June 4th, 1928

### *Right*

76 Park Avenue  
June 10, 1928  
June 10, 1928  
June 10, 1928  
June 1, 1928  
June 2, 1928  
June 3, 1928  
June 4, 1928

\*Do not use *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, or *Miss* in signing your name to a letter, to a check, or to any other paper. (There are exceptions to this rule.)

### *Wrong*

Mr. Oliver Brown  
Mrs. Oliver Brown  
Mrs. Kate Brown  
Miss Jane Brown

### *Right*

Oliver Brown  
Kate Brown  
Kate Brown  
Jane Brown

or

(Miss) Jane Brown

## Pitfalls in English

\*A woman never omits the *Mrs.* or *Miss* when registering at a hotel and she does not at this time use parenthesis.

NOTE: A man registering at a hotel with his wife may sign

Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Brown

If Mr. Brown does not like to use the abbreviation *Mr.* for himself, he may sign for himself and his wife:

Oliver Brown

Mrs. Oliver Brown

## PUNCTUATION IN LETTERS

You will find some hard and fast rules for punctuation on pages 320-353. In business letters of the present day there is a tendency to ignore many of the old rules.

Modern methods employ three kinds of punctuation: close, open, and conservative.

Close punctuation is the kind which makes liberal use of punctuation marks, according to the rules which are found in every grammar. It is used in both business and social letters.

Open punctuation is the kind which eliminates many punctuation marks. It aims to keep the meaning clear and, if there is no chance for a mis-

## How to Avoid Them

understanding, it employs as few punctuation marks as possible.

Conservative punctuation aims to strike a happy medium.

Open punctuation is used in business more than in social letters.

The method of punctuation is in such a transitional state that it is almost impossible to give you definite rules. Authorities are still disagreeing upon what should be eliminated. However, the following illustrations will help you.

### *Close Punctuation*

Mr. John G. Small,  
San Francisco, Cal.,

184 N. Parade Ave.,  
Los Angeles, Cal.,  
Jan. 6, 1928.

### *Open Punctuation*

Mr John G Small  
San Francisco, Cal

184 N Parade Ave  
Los Angeles, Cal  
Jan 6, 1928

The city should always be separated from the state by a comma. The figure representing the day of the month should be separated from the year by a comma. Probably eventually these two marks will disappear and the danger of a misunderstanding be obviated by leaving a well-defined space between the city and the state and between the day of the month and the year.

If you are not accustomed to open punctua-

## Pitfalls in English

tion, you will perhaps not like it at first; but after you observe that the letter looks much neater without so much unnecessary encumbrance and that progressive firms are using this style, you will become a convert to it. Anyway it is in the line of progress and it behooves you, the business man or woman, to keep abreast and even a little ahead of the times.

Even in the body of the letter you are permitted to omit many commas if the meaning without them is clear. (Periods, question marks, exclamation points, semicolons, colons, and quotation marks are not to be omitted.)

### ILLUSTRATION:

*Correct: a* If it is extremely cold tomorrow,  
we shall not ship the fruit.

*Correct: b* If it is extremely cold tomorrow we  
shall not ship the fruit.

Sentence *a* is no clearer with the comma than sentence *b* without one. In such a case, in either business or social letter, you may choose. You must decide which style of punctuation you are going to use and adhere to that style throughout your letter.

### BLOCKING

Blocking is the recently adopted method of keeping even the left edges of certain parts of a letter. (See letter forms, pages 272-279.)

## How to Avoid Them

### ILLUSTRATION:

#### *Blocked*

243 Elm Grove  
Chicago, Illinois

243 Elm Grove  
Chicago  
Illinois

#### *Not blocked*

243 Elm Grove  
Chicago, Illinois

243 Elm Grove  
Chicago  
Illinois

Typists usually employ the block system because it takes less time to bring the carriage of the typewriter over to a point under the first word of each line than it does to project each line a little farther to the right.

In writing with a pen or a pencil, the labor is no greater and if one prefers the slant effect he may use it. Most persons who study the appearance of a letter like the blocked form better.

If you block your heading and introduction, block the address on the envelope. Consistency is required.

### EXCEPTION

Though you block the heading, the introduction, and the address on the envelope, you are not obliged to block your paragraphs. You may do so if you wish. Most persons think that the paragraphs stand out more prominently if there is an indentation for each.

# Pitfalls in English

## FAMOUS LETTERS

At your public library you will be able to obtain letters written by famous persons. Read them for their charm of composition. The style of letters written many years ago will be quaint and naïve; the form will not be modern. For modern form and style read letters of famous men and women of the past ten or fifteen years. Let your librarian help you.

## ENVELOPE

The envelope should be addressed neatly and plainly. Write your return address distinctly in the upper left hand corner of the *face* of the envelope. Place the stamp squarely in the upper right hand corner leaving a narrow margin of the envelope above and at the right side of the stamp. Never put the stamp on the envelope so that the head is upside down.

## VARIOUS WAYS OF ADDRESSING AN ENVELOPE

1

5 days  
878 Park Avenue  
New York, N. Y.

Miss Jane Clowes  
333 Ashland Avenue  
Buffalo  
N. Y.

# How to Avoid Them

2

Mrs. Manuel River,  
194 Ocean View Ave.,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

5

Miss Bessie Klauber  
North Boston  
Erie County  
New York

3

Miss Sophie Alexander  
272 Linwood Avenue  
Buffalo, N Y

6

Miss Helen Brownell  
245 Elmwood Ave.  
Buffalo  
N. Y.

4

Dr. Ernest C. Hartwell  
Superintendent of Education  
Genesee Building  
Buffalo, N. Y.

7

Mr W H Daniels  
Denton, Cottier & Daniels  
Court and Pearl Streets  
Buffalo, N Y

# Pitfalls in English

## EXPLANATION OF PUNCTUATION ON ENVELOPES

### NUMBER 1

#### CONSERVATIVE PUNCTUATION

Periods follow the initials *N* and *Y*. A comma separates the city from the state when the city and the state are written on the same line as is the case in the upper left hand corner of the envelope.

### NUMBER 2

#### CLOSE PUNCTUATION

Every punctuation mark that could possibly be used is found here.

A period follows the abbreviation *Mrs.*

A comma finishes the first line.

A period follows the abbreviation *Ave.*

A comma finishes the second line.

The city is separated from the state by a comma.

A period follows each initial of the state.

The period after *Y* serves as a finish for the line.

### NUMBER 3

#### OPEN PUNCTUATION

The only punctuation mark used is the comma between the city and the state.

# How to Avoid Them

## NUMBER 4

### CONSERVATIVE PUNCTUATION

Here a few marks are employed, as is the case in Number 1.

A period follows the abbreviation for "Doctor."

To be consistent a period must follow the middle initial.

A comma must separate the city from the state.

Periods follow the initials for the state.

## NUMBER 5

### OPEN PUNCTUATION

The town, county, and state are on separate lines; therefore no punctuation is used.

## NUMBER 6

### CONSERVATIVE PUNCTUATION

Here the indented form is shown.

## NUMBER 7

### OPEN PUNCTUATION

A comma is used to separate city from state. Open punctuation here may startle you. The omission of periods after initials is permitted only in business letters. The comma appears after *Denton* because the firm's letter head is engraved in that way. (See page 296.)

## Pitfalls in English

There is a reason for the use of the comma in this particular place. It shows that *Denton* is the name of one member of the firm and that *Cottier* is the name of the other member. The & introduces the third member. Without the comma in the firm name, *Denton Cottier* might be the Christian name and the surname of one man (though in this particular case it would hardly be so because of the word *Daniels* which follows).

The following illustrations show how the comma (or its omission) alters the meaning:

Roger, Brown and Company	two men and company
Roger Brown and Company	one man and company

In names of firms it is not customary to use the comma directly preceding *and*. (Page 328)

## ETIQUETTE

Do not write social letters with a typewriter. Some celebrities who have a large correspondence are compelled to permit their secretaries to use a typewriter, but you and I should write with pen and ink.

Never omit your address from the letter. I mean by this that your address, in addition to

## How to Avoid Them

appearing on the envelope (which may have been thrown away), should be either in the upper right hand corner of the letter or the lower left hand corner. Even if your friend has been writing to you for years he, with no slight degree of annoyance, may have had to refer to his address book every time. It is therefore a great convenience to the recipient if he has your address before him.

Reply to the letters of your friends at the proper time: no sooner, no later. If your friend writes to you about twice a year, do not reply the moment his letter comes. If you do, you keep him in your debt most of the time. This may annoy him.

Reply promptly to all letters which, because of the nature of their contents, clearly indicate that the writer is anxious to receive a reply.

If possible, acknowledge an invitation, formal or informal, the day you receive it.

Remember to acknowledge by a friendly little note the unexpected courtesies which are extended to you by the casual acquaintance. Suppose that you have gone to a concert. At the conclusion of the concert you find that it is raining and you are obliged to stand in the lobby of the hall to wait for a taxicab. An acquaintance comes to your assistance, kindly taking you home in his car. Even though you

## Pitfalls in English

thank him at the door, it is a pleasing attention to write him a note. It is better to be too liberal than to be considered negligent of the niceties of courtesy.

In sending out Christmas cards or any other card of greeting to your doctor, lawyer, minister, teacher, or to anyone else who does not know you intimately and consequently may not recognize your penmanship, always include your surname and your address. The recipient may know many Clara's, Maud's, and John's but he will have no idea which one has sent the greeting if the surname is omitted. The recipient is uncomfortable at being unable to acknowledge your attention and you are deprived of the pleasure of a note of thanks.

Do not use the printed or engraved "thank you" cards. The attention which you have received deserves a return courtesy expressed through the personal note.

Do not thank in advance.

### ILLUSTRATION

*Poor*

Thanking you in advance, Helen, for the privilege of using your vacuum cleaner while you are to be away, I am,

Yours sincerely,

MAUD.

## How to Avoid Them

If you have asked the favor of borrowing the vacuum cleaner, do not take it for granted that Helen will lend it to you. Above all things do not let Helen know that you have taken it for granted by thanking in advance. If you thought it worth while to ask for the cleaner, you should think it more than worth while to thank Helen after she grants the request.

### FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE

Are you invited to formal functions often enough to remember the correct method of acknowledging your invitation, or do you become "panicky" whenever you find one of these delightful invitations among your mail? "What shall I do?" "How shall I answer this invitation to dinner?" "Dear me, I'd almost rather not be invited!"

Maybe you are in even a worse predicament than that of not knowing just what form to use. Perhaps you calmly sit down and write a friendly little note telling that the baby is ill and that you cannot attend the dinner. If you do you are committing a serious social error.

It is not my purpose to include the etiquette of formal correspondence in this book. I merely want you to know that there is a correct way to reply to invitations which begin with the name

## Pitfalls in English

of the person or persons issuing the invitation instead of beginning with *I* or *we*.

If you receive an invitation which begins

*Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Whiteman*  
*request the pleasure*

you commit a serious social error if you write in reply

*My dear Mr. and Mrs. Whiteman:*  
*I shall be delighted to accept*

Just as the invitation began with *Mr. and Mrs. Whiteman*, so must the reply begin with your own name and be written in the same form as the invitation

One invitation, one note of acceptance, and one note of regrets are here presented. They will suffice to show you how to acknowledge this particular form of invitation. They will be a constant reminder that whenever you receive such an invitation, you must be careful to follow the rules which polite usage dictates.

Your invitation may be different from the one in this book. It may require a slightly different reply from these illustrations. Indeed, it may require no reply. When you receive any formal invitation be sure to consult a reliable authority on whether or not to reply. Fascinating books on the subject are in every public

## How to Avoid Them

library. If you do not wish to carry the book home, copy the form which you need. Let the librarian help you if you are uncertain. She will be glad to come to your rescue.

### FORMAL INVITATION

Miss Joan Wiggins  
requests the pleasure of  
Miss Lela McDonald's  
company at dinner  
on Wednesday the fourth of November  
at seven o'clock  
at Five Hundred Eight Franklin Street

### ACCEPTANCE

Miss Lela McDonald  
accepts with pleasure  
Miss Joan Wiggins's  
kind invitation to dinner  
on Wednesday the fourth of November  
at seven o'clock

### REGRETS

Miss Lela McDonald  
regrets that a previous engagement  
prevents her accepting  
Miss Wiggins's  
kind invitation to dinner  
on Wednesday the fourth of November

## Pitfalls in English

The forms for acceptance and regrets are the same as those for the invitation. The following are incorrect because the words are not properly laid out. (When the words are correctly placed, the *form* is correct.)

### *Incorrect*

Miss Lela McDonald accepts with pleasure Miss Joan Wiggins's kind invitation to dinner on Wednesday the fourth of November at seven o'clock.

### *Incorrect*

Miss Lela McDonald regrets that a previous engagement prevents her accepting Miss Joan Wiggins's kind invitation to dinner on Wednesday the fourth of November at seven o'clock.

In writing with pen and ink such an invitation as the one on page 311, the *same arrangement* that is used for engraved forms must be observed.

### *Incorrect*

Miss Joan Wiggins requests the pleasure of Miss Lela McDonald's company at dinner on Wednesday the fourth of November at seven o'clock at five hundred eight Franklin Street.

## How to Avoid Them

*Correct*

Miss Joan Wiggins  
requests the pleasure of  
Miss Lela McDonald's  
company at dinner  
on Wednesday the fourth of November  
at seven o'clock  
at Five Hundred Eight Franklin Street

It is not necessary to give any reason for inability to attend a function. Under no circumstances give as an excuse business, illness, death in the family, or any other personal sorrow or difficulty. If you do not wish to state that a previous engagement prevents your being present, say:

Miss Lela McDonald  
regrets that she will be  
unable to accept  
Miss Wiggins's  
kind invitation to dinner  
on Wednesday the fourth of November

# Pitfalls in English

## AN EXPLANATION OF TERMS

(The terms which are now to be explained are in no way technical. They have the same meaning in this course that they have in ordinary conversation. It is necessary to understand them before taking up capitalization and punctuation.)

A sentence is a group of words expressing a *complete* thought.

The following groups of words from *Barren Ground* by Ellen Glasgow are not sentences because they are not complete thoughts. Ellen Glasgow adopts this style as do many other modern writers. If you wish to write correctly you will avoid it in your business and social letters. When you become a recognized author you may take liberties and introduce any style you like.

### NOT SENTENCES

“Old vibrations that were incomplete. Unconscious impulses which had never quivered into being. All the things that she might have known and had never known in her life.”

The following from *Barren Ground* by Ellen Glasgow are sentences because they express complete thoughts.

## How to Avoid Them

“Out of this whirling chaos in her mind Jason’s face emerged like the face of a marionette. Then dissolving as quickly as it had formed, it reappeared as the face of Nathan, and vanished again to assume the features of Richard Burch, of Bob Ellgood, and of every man she had ever known closely or remotely in her life. They meant nothing.” (3 sentences)

There are four kinds of sentences:

- a. A statement is a sentence that tells a fact.  
We get wool from sheep.
- b. A question is a sentence that asks something.  
Do we get wool from sheep?
- c. A command is a sentence that makes a request.  
Open the door.
- d. An exclamation is a word, a group of words, a statement, a question, or a command expressed with strong feeling.

Help! (a word expressed with strong feeling)

The idea! (a group of words expressed with strong feeling)

How exquisitely he paints! (a statement expressed with strong feeling)

You have never been to Europe! (a question expressed with strong feeling)

Open the window! (a command expressed with strong feeling)

# Pitfalls in English

## MORE ABOUT EXCLAMATIONS

Simple statement: *a* He paints exquisitely.

Strong statement: *b* He paints exquisitely!

Strong statement: *c* How exquisitely he paints!

Simple question: *d* Have you never been to  
Europe?

Strong question: *e* Have you never been to  
Europe!

Strong question: *f* You have never been to  
Europe!

Simple command: *g* Open the window.

Simple command: *h* Please open the window.

Strong command: *i* Open the window!

Sentence *a* is a statement. The reader reads it, or the speaker utters it, calmly.

Sentence *b* is uttered with strong feeling.

Sentence *c* is uttered with even stronger feeling.

Sentence *d* is a plain, simple question.

Sentence *e* is a question uttered with strong feeling and an expression of surprise.

Sentence *f* is a question uttered in the same manner as *e*.

Sentence *g* is a simple command.

Sentence *h* is a polite command, called a request.

## How to Avoid Them

Sentence *i* is a strong command, expressed in such a manner as to show that there is need to hurry. Perhaps someone is about to faint

Sentences *b*, *c*, *e*, *f*, *i* are exclamations.

### CAPITALIZATION

#### BEGIN WITH A CAPITAL LETTER

1. The first word of every sentence.

*Electricity* is used for heating and lighting. (statement)

*Have* you ever been to Europe? (question)

*Take* time to do things thoroughly. (command)

*What* a delightful trip you must have had! (exclamation)

2. The first word of every line of poetry.

*In* careless patches through the wood

*The* clumps of yellow primrose stood,

*And* sheets of white anemones,

*Like* driven snow against the trees,

*Had* covered up the violet,

*But* left the blue-bell bluer yet.

*A. A. Milne.*

3. The first word of every exact quotation.

The nurse called softly, "*Let* us have some air."

Refer to *Caution*, page 346.

## Pitfalls in English

4. Names of individual persons, places, and things.

girl—*Mary*

city—*Washington*

newspaper—*Times*

5. Days of the week and months of the year.

(Seasons are not capitalized.)

*Sunday, Monday, Tuesday*

*January, February, March*

*spring, summer, autumn or fall, winter*

6. Names of the Deity.

*God, Father, Deity, Christ, Jesus, Nazarene, Eternal One, His* (when referring to Deity), *Thou* (when writing the word used in addressing Deity), *Almighty, Lord*

7. Important words in titles of books or other compositions.

*The Amenities of Book-Collecting, The Middle of the Road, Sights from my Window*

8. Titles when used in reference to definite persons.

Did you see the picture of *President John D. Larkin* which the club has purchased for the rest room?

## How to Avoid Them

9. *North, East, South, West* when referring to a section of country, but not when referring to direction.

I enjoy the *South* in winter.

New York is *south* of Albany.

10. The names of things formally personified.

The *Spoon* said to the *Dish*, "———."

11. *I* and *O* when used as words.

The man said that *I* was a capable worker.

I'm worried; *O*, Harry, do help me!

For difference between *O* and *oh* see page 228.

12. Words derived from proper names.

<i>African</i>	derived from	<i>Africa</i>
<i>American</i>	derived from	<i>America</i>
<i>Bostonian</i>	derived from	<i>Boston</i>

13. Names of political parties, religious denominations, epochs of time, particular events, particular documents.

*Republican, Democrat, Socialist*

*Baptist, Protestant, Christian, Jew, Catholic, Presbyterian*

*Middle Ages, the Renaissance*

*Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, New Year*

*Magna Charta, Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States*

# Pitfalls in English

NOTE: If you are interested to find further uses for the capital or if you are in doubt as to the capitalization of other words in your business or social correspondence, consult a grammar or the dictionary, or both.

## PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is not the difficult feature of correct writing which many persons consider it to be. It is the simple act of separating sections of composition so that the meaning may be clear to the reader.

The most commonly used punctuation marks are:

period	.
question mark	?
exclamation point	!
comma	,
semicolon	;
colon	:
apostrophe	'
quotation marks	" "
hyphen	-
dash	—
parenthesis	( )
dots	.....

Those who understand little of the correct method of punctuation insert commas and semi-

## How to Avoid Them

colons, as well as some of the other marks, here, there, and everywhere, without regard to reason or judgment. This sort of punctuation, almost as much as incorrect spelling, indicates a lack of education. There was a time when punctuation marks were used more liberally than at the present. The tendency now is to use as few as possible.

No two authorities agree on the method of employing punctuation marks. All agree that it is better to employ few than many. The one thing about which to be sure is clearness of meaning. Before giving you models and devices to study I shall present a few sentences in which the meaning, for the moment, is not clear, because of incorrect punctuation.

Not Clear: *a* I shall go for John wishes me to assist him with his books.

Clear:       *b* I shall go, for John wishes me to assist him with his books.

Sentence *a* begins as though I intend to go for John (call for John).

In sentence *b*, the comma after *go* shows that *for John* belongs to the second part of the sentence; and that I shall go because John wishes me to assist him with his books, perhaps at his office.

## Pitfalls in English

Not Clear: *c* When I was ready to read the  
books could not be found.

Clear: *d* When I was ready to read, the  
books could not be found.

Sentence *c* begins as if to say, "When I was ready to read the books."

In sentence *d*, the comma shows that the expression *the books* belongs to the second part—*the books could not be found*.

Not Clear: *e* They ought to have a maid for  
their mother works entirely too  
hard.

Clear: *f* They ought to have a maid, for  
their mother works entirely too  
hard.

It is not: They ought to have a maid for their  
mother.

It is: They ought to have a maid for  
(meaning *because*) their mother  
works too hard.

The maid serves the whole family;  
she is not for the mother alone.

Do not think that this little temporary misunderstanding is unimportant. It breaks into a smooth reading and causes the reader to begin over again. If such an error occurs in a letter of

## How to Avoid Them

application, a business letter, or a piece of fiction, it is annoying to the reader and militates against the author. Sometimes serious misunderstandings occur from incorrect punctuation; lawsuits, entailing great expense, often result.

Clear:        *g* I am introducing to you by a separate letter my cousin, Kate.

Clear:        *h* I am introducing to you by a separate letter my Cousin Kate.

In sentence *g* the comma indicates that I am writing to a person named *Kate*.

In sentence *h* the omission of the comma shows that the person being introduced is *Cousin Kate*.

Both *g* and *h* are clear; the meanings are different.

## USES OF PERIOD, QUESTION MARK, EXCLAMATION POINT

Every sentence must close with one of these three marks:

period,    question mark,    exclamation point.

.

?

!

Master thoroughly the uses of these three marks before attacking the next.

Rule 1    The period is used after

## Pitfalls in English

{ a statement	Exquisite tapestries are for sale.
{ a command	Please open the door.
{ an abbreviation	amt. (abbreviation for amount)
{ initials	G. W. (initials for George Washington)

Rule 2 The question mark is used after

a question	Is New York larger than Chicago?
------------	----------------------------------

Rule 3 The exclamation point is used after

exclamations	{ Fire!
	{ How strange!
	{ Come here!
	{ What a beautiful view you have!
	{ You can't read English!

Do not introduce question marks and exclamation points at unusual places with the idea of expressing your particular mood when writing.

Poor: I played (?) at my teacher's musicale last evening. I received little applause! That tells the tale. Mother says she thinks that I am not doing well and now I must practice two hours a day!

## How to Avoid Them

The question mark is supposed to convey the idea that perhaps the reader would not call it "playing." Do not indulge in this cheap style of punctuation which arouses criticism and amusement on the part of the educated reader. Unless you know how to apply a mark, do not use it.

### THE COMMA

,

This little insignificant mark ( , ) has more uses than has any other of the punctuation marks mentioned on page 320. Because of this you are urged to master the marks which have already been explained and which come only at the end of the sentence. Then spend much time on the comma before studying the next mark.

**Rule 1** Separate a term of address from the rest of the sentence by a comma or commas.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

- a George, I should have paid the debt long ago. (addressing *George*)
- a I should have paid the debt long ago, George. (addressing *George*)
- a Fair daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon. (addressing *fair daffodils*)

## Pitfalls in English

- a* Sleep, how have I frightened thee. (addressing *sleep*)
- b* I know, George, that I should have paid the debt long ago. (addressing *George*)
- b* Now, my dear, you must go to bed. (addressing *my dear*)
- b* "Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere."  
(addressing *my children*)

Sentences marked *a* require one comma.

Sentences marked *b* require two commas.

Do you see why?

Rule 2 When two complete short sentences are connected by *and*, *but*, or *or*, a comma *usually* precedes *and*, *but*, or *or*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

- a* The wind howled the whole night long, and the snow heaped itself along the road.
- b* The girl sings, but she cannot dance.
- c* I can go, or I can remain here while you go.

Observe that each italicized section is a complete thought or sentence.

If the parts of the sentence preceding and following *and*, *but*, or *or* are short and simple, the comma may be omitted, provided that there is

## How to Avoid Them

no temporary or permanent ambiguity of meaning.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*Ambiguous: d* I shall call for Mary and John will call for Tom.

*Clear: e* I shall call for Mary, and John will call for Tom.

In rapidly reading sentence *d*, you would say, "I shall call for Mary and John ——" and at that point you would discover that the writer intended to call only for Mary. Another person will call for Tom. The comma in sentence *e* prevents that temporary misunderstanding.

*Ambiguous: f* I shall go to church and the meeting I shall attend later.

*Clear: g* I shall go to church, and the meeting I shall attend later.

In rapidly reading sentence *f*, you would say, "I shall go to church and the meeting ——" and at that point you would discover that the writer really meant that he could not go to the meeting at that time but that he would go later. The comma in sentence *g* prevents that temporary misunderstanding and renders a smooth first reading.



## How to Avoid Them

*e* The teacher uses red, blue, or green pencils for marking papers.

It was once the fashion to omit the comma before *and* and *or* in sentences like *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, and *e*. No real harm would be done in omitting the last comma in sentences like *b*, *c*, *d*, and *e*. But if the last comma in sentence *a* were omitted, the person writing the order would be making a request for only two kinds of sandwiches: ham for one kind; and egg with lettuce for the other. What he really wants is an assortment of three kinds and his punctuation without the second comma would mislead the caterer.

Here is another illustration to show that the comma is necessary before *and* to avoid misunderstanding.

Suppose that I, Mr. Randall's secretary, wish to announce by means of a note placed upon Mr. Randall's desk that the three men for whom he has been waiting have arrived.

### I WRITE:

Mr. Randall, Mr. Baker and Mr. Hughes are in the reception room waiting to see you.

My employer does not request to have the men sent to him. I finally return to his private office to see what is the reason for the delay.

## Pitfalls in English

Mr. Randall says that he is waiting for the third man, his brother, a second Mr. Randall.

I call his attention to the fact that I have written the three names upon his paper. He replies that I punctuated incorrectly so that he interpreted the first comma to mean that I was addressing him and that the two names connected by *and* without the comma indicated that two men were in the reception room; he was waiting for the third to arrive. The sentence should have been punctuated as follows:

Mr. Randall, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Hughes are in the reception room waiting to see you.

Do not think that a comma always precedes *and* and *or*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*f* She plays piano and violin.

*g* She plays either piano or violin.

*h* We went to the gymnasium and played basketball.

*i* Mr. Randall, Mr. Baker and Mr. Hughes are waiting for an interview.

Sentences *f* and *g* refer to two articles connected by *and* and *or*. No comma is used when only two articles are named.

In sentence *h* the second member, the part after *and*, is not a complete sentence; therefore,

## How to Avoid Them

no comma is required before *and*. (Refer to Rule 2 under *comma*.)

In sentence *i* the comma after *Mr. Randall* indicates that the note is addressed to Mr. Randall. He is being informed that only two men are waiting to see him. No comma is used for only two names connected by *and* or *or*.

It is clear that a much better way of writing such a note is this:

Mr. Randall:

Mr. Baker and Mr. Hughes are waiting for an interview.

Rule 4 Explanatory words are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*a* We, the people of the United States, have made these laws.

*b* George Washington, the first president, was born in Virginia.

*c* The shallowest of the Great Lakes, Lake Erie, is treacherous.

*d* I, John Halifax, do hereby declare that the statement is true.

Rule 5 Parenthetical expressions may be set off by commas.

# Pitfalls in English

## ILLUSTRATION

*a* John, the boy to whom I gave the money,  
did not return with the package.

The parenthetical expression is *the boy to whom I gave the money*. A comma precedes and follows the expression.

Rules 4 and 5 are similar.

Rule 6 A comma separates the answers, *yes*  
and *no*, from the rest of the sentence.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*a* Yes, the water is rough at present.

*b* No, do not bring your bathing suit.

Rule 7 When a sentence *begins* with *if* or *when*,  
the first section is *usually* separated  
from the rest of the sentence by a  
comma.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*a* If you pour hot water into a cold glass, the  
glass will crack.

*b* When the clock strikes six, come in to tea.

Rule 8 A comma separates the exact words of  
a speaker from the rest of the sentence.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*a* He calmly replied, "That is all I have to say."

## How to Avoid Them

*b* "Yes," he said, "the doctor will soon be there."

*c* "The patient is improving," said the nurse.

**IMPORTANT:** It is necessary to be particular about the location of the comma when using quotation marks. Study sentences *a*, *b*, *c* under Rule 8. You will see that the comma always precedes the quotation marks.

*Wrong:* "Yes", he said, "the doctor will soon be there."

*Right:* "Yes," he said, "the doctor will soon be there."

*Wrong:* "The patient is improving", said the nurse.

*Right:* "The patient is improving," said the nurse.

For the position of other punctuation marks used in connection with quotation marks, refer to pages 344-346.

**Rule 9** Separate the day of the month from the year by a comma.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*Right:* February 1, 1946 (not February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946)

*Right:* October 12, 1492 (not Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>, 1492)

*Right:* March 2, 1620 (not Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1620)

# Pitfalls in English

- Rule 10    Separate the name of the city or the town from the name of the state by a comma.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Chicago, Illinois

Chicago, Ill.

New York, N. Y. (not New York City)

- Rule 11    A comma *may* follow the salutation in a *friendly* letter.  
Refer to colon (page 341).

## ILLUSTRATIONS

My dear Katherine,

Dear James,

My dear James,

My dear Mr. Brown,

- Rule 12    Such abbreviations and expressions as *viz.*, *i.e.*, *e.g.*, *thus*, *that is*, are followed by commas. See page 339.

Be careful not to acquire the "comma fault." It is the habit of placing a comma after every little group of three or four words as in the following:

- a It was a bright summer day, when John, walking hand in hand, with his father, saw, crawling, on the sidewalk, a green caterpillar, with the woolliest back, he had ever seen.

# How to Avoid Them

## IMPROVED

*b* It was a bright summer day when John, walking hand in hand with his father, saw, crawling on the sidewalk, a green caterpillar with the woolliest back he had ever seen.

Through the omission of the other commas shown in *a*, there is no ambiguity in meaning in *b*. The four commas used precede and follow explanatory expressions which are really parenthetical. (Rule 5)

## WHEN TO USE AND WHEN NOT TO USE A COMMA WITH "WHO," "WHICH," AND "WHERE"

When the expression introduced by *who*, *which*, and *where* is parenthetical (put in by way of explanation), a comma should precede and follow the expression so introduced. When the expression is not parenthetical, omit the comma.

## ILLUSTRATION

1. The man who has the large hat on is my uncle.
2. The man, who later proved to be a friend, seemed antagonistic.
3. The house which was built before the war is likely to have cost less than the house built since the war.

## Pitfalls in English

4. The house, which was built before the war, was her particular pride.
5. The house which was built before the war was her particular pride. The one built after the war she did not care so much about. It was more expensive but it looked cheap.
6. I found the place where we ate our lunch.
7. Buffalo, where Fillmore lived, was then a small city.

In sentence 1, *who has the large hat on* is not parenthetical. It is really needed to point out which man is meant.

In sentence 2, *who later proved to be a friend* appears to be an afterthought. It is thrown in. It is parenthetical. It is unnecessary to the sentence. *The man seemed antagonistic* is complete without the additional expression.

In sentence 3, *which was built before the war* is absolutely necessary to the sentence. *It is not thrown in*. It is not parenthetical. It is needed to point out exactly which house is meant.

In sentence 4, *which was built before the war* is parenthetical. There is no way of knowing this fact in this particular case but by the tone of voice. The speaker is telling about a home planned and built by his friend. He wishes to state that it is the particular pride of the builder.

## How to Avoid Them

Incidentally he adds that it was built before the war.

In sentence 5, *which was built before the war* points out which particular house the speaker means. The owner built two houses, but the one built before the war was her particular pride.

In sentence 6, *where we ate our lunch* is not an additional thought. It points out exactly the spot for which we were looking.

In sentence 7, *where Fillmore lived* is an additional or parenthetical thought.

Often it is difficult to tell whether or not to use a comma. Saying the sentence aloud with proper intonation will usually help you to decide whether the expression about which you are in doubt is parenthetical or not.

If it is parenthetical, use commas; if it is not, do not use them.

## SEMICOLON

;

**Rule 1** In rule 2 under *comma* you are told to use a comma to separate two complete short sentences connected by *and*, *but*, or *or*. However, if there is a comma in either one of the parts before or after *and*, *but*, or *or*, use a

## Pitfalls in English

semicolon instead of a comma to separate the first complete sentence member from *and*, *but*, or *or*.

### ILLUSTRATION

- a* She walked rapidly along, but she did not know that she was followed.
- b* She walked rapidly along, deep in thought; but she did not know that she was followed.

Sentence *a* is composed of two complete sentences connected by *but*.

Neither section contains a comma; hence a comma is used before *but*.

Sentence *b* is composed of two complete sentences the first of which contains a comma; therefore a semicolon is used before *but*.

**Rule 2** Separate by a semicolon two simple sentences connected by *so*, *therefore*, *hence*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *moreover*, *accordingly*, *besides*, *also*, *thus*, *then*, *still*, *otherwise*.

- a* She walked rapidly along; *nevertheless* she kept one eye on the stranger across the street.
- b* She seemed to fear him; *hence* it was wise to be on the alert.

## How to Avoid Them

**Rule 3** Separate by a semicolon (never by a comma) two simple sentences of close connection between which there is no connecting word.

*a Wrong:* She seemed to fear him, it was wise to be on the alert.

*b Right:* She seemed to fear him; it was wise to be on the alert.

**Rule 4** Use a semicolon to precede such abbreviations and expressions as *viz.*, *i. e.*, *e. g.*, *thus*, *that is*.

*a* There are four kinds of sentences; viz., statement, question, command, exclamation.

*b* Short ways of writing certain words are called abbreviations; *e.g.*, *assn.* is the abbreviation for *association*.

**Rule 5** If the meaning for the moment is not clear with a comma, use a semicolon.

*Not Clear:* *a* She had gowns, horses, and jewels, and all the world paid her homage.

*Clear:* *b* She had gowns, horses, and jewels; and all the world paid her homage.

## Pitfalls in English

Sentence *a* appears at first reading to mean that she had gowns, horses, jewels, and all the world.

Sentence *b* shows that *all the world* paid homage to her; not that she had all the world.

### COLON

:

Rule 1 A colon is often placed before a long quotation.

*a* George Washington aptly said:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*b* George Washington aptly said:

“\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

*c* George Washington wrote: “\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

Rule 2 A colon is often placed before a list of particulars.

The five Great Lakes are: Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Superior.

## How to Avoid Them

Rule 3 A colon follows the salutation in a letter, especially a business letter.

### *Business*

Gentlemen:

Dear Sir:

Mesdames:

Dear Madam:

My dear Mr. Gordon:

My dear Mrs. Gordon:

### *Social*

Dear Mary, or Dear

Mary:

My dear Mr. Gordon,

or

My dear Mr. Gordon:

## ALL THE USES OF THE APOSTROPHE

,

This little character is an apostrophe. Here it is . ' The word is pronounced *a-pós-tro-fe*, with the accent on the second syllable.

To put an apostrophe in the wrong place or to omit it when it should be used or to use it when it should not be used is as grave an error in writing as to misspell a word.

The apostrophe has four uses:

Rule 1 It shows the possessive form of a word.

Mary possesses a hat. You write, *Mary's* hat. See pages 41-61 for complete information.

Rule 2 It sometimes indicates *of a, of an, of the*. See pages 41 and 42.

## Pitfalls in English

Rule 3 It shows the omission of one or more letters. See below.

Rule 4 It shows the form used when we wish to express more than one letter or figure. Two e's in need. Three 3's in nine.

Rules 1 and 2 are fully explained on pages 41-61.

Rule 4 is explained above.

Rule 3 is enlarged upon below.

The only care which needs to be taken under rule 3 (omission) is that of placing the apostrophe in exactly the spot from which the letter or letters have been omitted. Many persons write *do'nt* for *don't* meaning *do not*. The *o* in *not* has been omitted; therefore the apostrophe must be placed between the *n* and the *t*. Words from which letters are omitted and in which the apostrophe is used to show the omission are called *contractions*. Contractions are not used in dignified correspondence. They are correctly used in letters to one's intimates, relatives, and in speech which is familiar. You will find many contractions in the dictionary but they are marked "colloquial." When the words are marked "col" (colloquial), good taste requires that we do not use them in any but the most familiar type of letter or speech.

# How to Avoid Them

## CONTRACTIONS

I've	means I have
you've	means you have
he's	means he is
she's	means she is
it's	means it is
you've	means you have
they've	means they have
they're	means they are
who's there	means who is there
don't	means do not
doesn't	means does not
'tis	means it is
can't	means cannot
won't	means will not
shan't	means shall not
wouldn't	means would not
shouldn't	means should not
I'd	means I should (would)

*Ain't* is in disrepute and should never be used. It means *am not* and *are not*. It does not mean *has not* and *have not*. It is mentioned here to call attention to the fact that although it is in the dictionary, it is a vulgarism which no one who aspires to speak well will use.

Other contractions about which a word of caution is necessary are *don't* and *doesn't*. It is

## Pitfalls in English

wrong to say *He don't, She don't, It don't*. *Don't* means *do not*. It is wrong to say *He do not, She do not, It do not*. Therefore:

### *Wrong*

He don't  
She don't  
It don't

### *Right*

He doesn't  
She doesn't  
It doesn't

I don't	is correct because	I do not is correct.
We don't	is correct because	We do not is correct.
They don't	is correct because	They do not is correct.

## QUOTATION MARKS

“ ”

- Rule 1 Use quotation marks before and after the exact words of a speaker.
- Rule 2 Use quotation marks before and after each division of the exact words of a speaker. Refer to sentence c.
- Rule 3 Use quotation marks with the title of a book or a composition.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

The following sentences show how to use quotation marks. Observe carefully the other

## How to Avoid Them

punctuation marks and the use of the capital letters.

- a* "At least our friendship has brought us comfort," he said in a low voice.
- b* She said jokingly, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."
- c* "But," said he, "we lost our way in the country."
- d* He recited, "Listen, my children, and you shall hear . . . "; you know the rest of the poem.
- e* I have read the following books this month: "One Increasing Purpose," "This Freedom," and "The Amenities of Book Collecting."
- f* Mary replied, "The boys are walking on our lawn."
- g* Mary said that the boys were walking on our lawn.
- h* He cried "Fire!"
- i* His silly excuse was "unavoidable delay"!

Quotation marks when used with period, comma, or dots must follow the period, comma, or dots. (Observe sentences *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*)

Quotation marks, when used with a semicolon usually precede it. (Observe sentence *d*)

## Pitfalls in English

Quotation marks always follow any punctuation marks that belong to the quotation. In sentence *h* the word *Fire* was uttered in an excited manner shown by the exclamation point. The exclamation point belongs to the expression. Therefore the quotation marks follow the exclamation point.

In sentence *i* the whole expression was uttered with a feeling of disgust at the lame excuse which was expressed by the quoted remarks of two words. The whole expression therefore is the exclamation, and the exclamation point follows the quotation marks. (unimportant)

In sentence *g* there are no quotation marks because the exact words used by Mary are not quoted. For Mary's exact words refer to sentence *f*.

### CAPITALS IN QUOTATIONS

(See page 317.)

CAUTION: Notice that *we*, sentence *c*, page 345, is not begun with a capital letter because it is not the first word of the exact quotation. *But* is the first word.

In sentence *h*, *Fire* is begun with a capital letter because it has the force of a sentence. It is as though the speaker excitedly called, "The house is afire!"

# How to Avoid Them

## HYPHEN

-

Neither lexicographers nor grammarians agree upon the correct use of the hyphen. You will find no rhyme nor reason for the use or the omission of this little mark. *Blackboard* requires no hyphen; *brand-new* must have one. Grammarians tell us that a hyphen is used to separate the parts of some compound words; but just what is a compound word? *Hatbox* appears to have that distinction, but exists without a hyphen; *light-heartedness* is a compound and requires a hyphen.

To use the hyphen incorrectly or to omit it when it should be used is not an error of which to be ashamed; but if you are precise by nature and wish to use this mark as consistently as possible, consult a good dictionary or a grammar. You will then have authority should a dispute arise.

Sometimes a hyphen is necessary to avoid a misunderstanding. If you wish to speak of a teacher in the normal school, you will amuse a few purists if you write:

*Misleading:* a Mary is a normal school-teacher.

Sentence *a* means that Mary is normal, not abnormal.

## Pitfalls in English

*Clear:*            *b* Mary is a normal-school teacher.

Sentence *b* means that Mary is a teacher in a normal school.

### HYPHEN IN COMPOUND WORDS

Rule 1 Certain compound words are always written with a hyphen. Here are a few; for others consult a good dictionary or a grammar.

father-in-law	twenty-four
mother-in-law	three-fourths
brother-in-law	three twenty-fourths
sister-in-law	semi-independent
six-cylinder	first-class

Certain compound words and others not compound are often incorrectly written with a hyphen. Here are a few. Do not use a hyphen. (Authorities disagree on those which are italicized.)

bookkeeper	biweekly
grandmother	<i>today</i>
Attorney General	<i>tonight</i>
commander in chief	<i>tomorrow</i>
cooperate	boycott
lieutenant colonel	horse-power

Rule 2 A hyphen is used to divide a word into syllables: per-pe-trate.

## How to Avoid Them

A word divided for any reason whatsoever must be correctly divided.

*Wrong:* perp-e-trate

*Right:* per-pe-trate

When it is necessary to divide a word at the end of a line, never so divide it as to have only one letter at the end or the beginning of a line.

The syllable preceding the dots in the following illustrations may be considered to be at the end of the line.

*Wrong:* a . . . . . bove

*Right:* This word should not be divided.

*Wrong:* ide . . . . . a

*Right:* This word should not be divided.

*Wrong:* inquir . . . . . y

*Right:* in . . . . . quiry

Use few hyphens and use them correctly.

### DASH

—

**Rule 1** The dash is used to show a sudden change of thought.

### ILLUSTRATION

If I had only arrived before she passed away—but why lament what cannot be changed—I might have helped to alleviate her suffering.

## Pitfalls in English

Rule 2 The dash is sometimes used after a colon to introduce a direct quotation.

### ILLUSTRATION

The man said:—"Watch your step," and at that moment I slipped and broke my arm.

Rule 3 The dash is used to inclose a parenthetical expression.

### ILLUSTRATION

Will you attend to the matter—that is, if you possibly can—before tomorrow?

## PARENTHESIS

( )

These two curves ( ) taken together are called a parenthesis.

This curve alone ( is a parenthesis.

This curve alone ) is a parenthesis.

In other words, you may say that you will include the expression in a parenthesis, meaning the two curves facing each other; or you may say, if by mistake you have omitted one of the curves, that you have omitted a parenthesis. Some authorities apply the word *parentheses* to the two curves.

## How to Avoid Them

**Rule 1** A parenthesis ( ) is used to inclose an interpolated expression. The part before the parenthesis and the part after it must make a complete thought.

*Wrong: a* I have tried my level best (and shall continue to try to) serve you.

*Right: b* I have tried my level best (and shall continue to try) to serve you.

*Test:* Read sentence *a* omitting the part inclosed in the parenthesis. You will see that the remaining parts do not make a complete sentence.

*Remaining parts:* I have tried my level *best* serve you. (not a complete sentence)

*Test:* Read sentence *b* omitting the part inclosed in the parenthesis. You will see that the remaining parts do make a complete sentence.

*Remaining parts:* I have tried my level *best* to serve you. (This is complete.)

When using a parenthesis always make this test.

**Rule 2** If you are in doubt as to dates or some other facts of information which you are

## Pitfalls in English

recording, you have the privilege of using a parenthesis inclosing a question mark to express your doubt.

He was born in Bohemia (?) in the year 1685.

Use the question mark and exclamation point in parenthesis seldom.

*Poor:* He delivered a sermon (?) last Sunday.

*Poor:* John presented me with five pounds (!) of candy.

### PUNCTUATION IN CONNECTION WITH A PARENTHESIS

When a parenthesis ends a sentence, the closing punctuation mark is placed outside the parenthesis unless the part inclosed is a complete sentence.

1. I went to business yesterday (just as you said I'd do).
2. After you fully understand grammar, study rhetoric. (Rhetoric is a high school subject.)

Use a comma with a parenthesis, only if a comma should be used without the parenthesis. Place the comma after the parenthesis.

- a* When Columbus landed, he immediately began to establish friendly relations with the Indians.

## How to Avoid Them

*Wrong: b* When Columbus landed, (1492) he immediately began to establish friendly relations with the Indians.

*Right: c* When Columbus landed (1492), he immediately began to establish friendly relations with the Indians.

Since the comma is required after *landed* in sentence *a*, it is required in sentence *c* after the parenthetical date which refers to the previous words.

### DOTS

. . . . .

**Rule 1** Dots are used to show the omission of a part of a quotation.

“The snow had begun in the gloaming  
And busily . . . ”

**Rule 2** Dots show a vagueness of thought on the part of a writer, too indefinite for expression.

Dear Dr. Gorton . . . I am stunned  
at hearing of his death!

One good way to learn to punctuate correctly is through reading. Take a good magazine and read a paragraph to get the sense. Then begin over and read to the first punctuation mark.

## Pitfalls in English

Try to reason why it was used in that particular spot; why that particular mark was used instead of some other mark. See if the meaning without the mark would be as clear as with it. Sometimes the meaning will be clear without the mark but it has been placed there to break a long sentence and relieve the eye. One takes breath there, so to speak.

Study the following to see if you understand the reason for every punctuation mark. If you do not, consult your rules for assistance.

1. These articles are in the trunk: hats, coats, dresses, furs, and underwear.
2. I like ham, cheese, and egg and lettuce sandwiches. (three kinds)
3. She knew every modulation; he had argued with her many times before.
4. She saw his expression change, and she quickly called the maid.'
5. She saw his expression change; she quickly called the maid.
6. If you do not obey instructions, you are to be punished.
7. Water is composed of two elements; viz., hydrogen and oxygen.
8. The man called, "Drop that gun!"
9. "Will you," said Tom, "call my father to the telephone?"

## How to Avoid Them

10. John replied, "Tom, I am sorry, but I am unable to walk to the door."
11. "All right," said Tom.
12. Haven't I told you—well, what's the use of arguing?
13. Please open the door.
14. No, it is too cold.

## KEY TO EXERCISE 1, PAGE 40

joys	ships	tables
rats	babies	pianos
women	ladies	mottoes
churches	oxen	tombs
fathers-in-law	foxes	scarfs or scarves
sheep	knives	fish or fishes
leaves	nails	moneys or monies

## KEY TO EXERCISE 2, PAGE 53

1. He is taking a four *years'* course in a technical school.
2. The table was set by the *man's* butler.
3. The *tailor's* clerk demanded an increase of salary.
4. He left without giving me a *moment's* warning.
5. Four *years* ago I entered the school. (the *ago* of *four years*—no sense to that—no apostrophe)
6. Mr. Peters stood the chair upon *its* legs. (*Its* does not mean *it is*—no apostrophe)
7. *Men's* clothes are severe in style.
8. We went to Mr. *Rogers's* home last evening.
9. We went to Mr. *Roger's* home last evening.

## How to Avoid Them

10. I think that *it's* a business asset to speak correctly.
11. The *deer's* head was injured.
12. The *deer's* heads were injured.
13. These books are *theirs*.
14. Mr. *Church's* hat blew off.
15. *Charles's* violin is damaged.
16. I wished him the *season's* greeting.
17. Mr. Jones just left the *child's* coat here.
18. Mr. *Jones* just left the city.
19. I want five *dollars'* worth of service.
20. The *people's* vote will indicate what the feeling towards the matter is.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 3, PAGE 60

1. It was *our* coming in late that annoyed the chairman.
2. Does *our* walking in the upper apartment disturb you?
3. *We*, arriving late, took seats in the rear of the room.
4. Do you like *our* calling to see you daily?
5. The *note's* falling due on Sunday gives us one day longer.
6. *Its* falling due on Sunday gives us one day longer.
7. *It*, falling due on Sunday, can be paid on Monday.

## Pitfalls in English

8. *My* not wanting the carpenter on Monday left him free to go to you.
9. *I*, not wanting the carpenter on Monday, telephoned to you that you might have him for the day.
10. What do you think of the idea of *my* studying to be a doctor?
11. Had you heard of *our* going to Europe?
12. Did *my* going change your plans?
13. The *plumber's* coming late upset my plans.
- \*14. The *children's* being absent annoyed the teacher.
15. The *ladies'* wearing of expensive gowns indicated the extravagance of the times.
16. He does not approve of *Mary's* traveling alone.

\*It is very clear that the *apostrophe with s* is required in sentence 14. Without the apostrophe and *s* the sentence would read:

The children, being absent, annoyed the teacher.  
If they were absent how could they annoy?

NOTE: If you object to the sound of some of these sentences, please have confidence that they are correct. Either use these words this way or change the construction entirely.

# How to Avoid Them

## ILLUSTRATION

- Sentence 4 might read: Do you like us to call  
to see you daily?
- Sentence 5 might read: Since Sunday is a legal  
holiday, we have one  
day longer.
- Sentence 6 might read: Since the note falls due  
on Sunday, we have  
one more day.
- Sentence 14 might read: The absence of the  
children annoyed the  
teacher.
- Sentence 15 might read: The expensive gowns  
of the women indi-  
cated the extrava-  
gance of the times.

## KEY TO EXERCISE 4, PAGE 68

1. He certainly does like to *lie* in the sun.
2. Yesterday Rover *lay* in the sun all morning.
3. *Shall* I *lie* here?
4. *Shall* I *lay* the package here?
5. Mother *is lying* down; don't disturb her.
6. Father *laid* my books on the table this  
morning.
7. Father *was lying* down but he is in the gar-  
den now.
8. I *will lie* down if you insist.

## Pitfalls in English

9. *Did* you *lie* down yesterday as the doctor ordered?
10. Mary *lay* in the hammock all yesterday afternoon.
11. The responsibility *lies* with the railroad company. (present) or *lay* (past)
12. The responsibility *lay* with the railroad company; so Mr. Jones forced prompt payment for the injury to his property.
13. Mary *is laying* the clothes away now.
14. She *lies*; she is not to be trusted.
15. *Have* you *lain* down at all today?
16. I *had* just *lain* down when the bell rang.
17. *Lie* down, Rover.
18. *Lay* the hat in the box.
19. The children *lay* everything around. It is impossible to keep order.
20. He *has laid* your hat on the piano; please put it away.

Sentences 3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 20 contain an extra italicized word.

Refer to notes *a*, *b*, page 67; *c*, page 68, regarding the use of these words.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 5, PAGE 72

1. The *sitting* hen could be seen from my window.
2. *Does* my coat *sit* well across the shoulders?
3. He *is sitting* in the other room.

## How to Avoid Them

4. I *have sat* here exactly one hour.
5. He *has set* the table.
6. I *set* the table for mother.
7. *Will* you please *set* this down for me?
8. The woman is *sitting* in the hall.
9. *Do* you *sit* there?
10. I *sat* there yesterday.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 6, PAGE 75

1. Has he *risen* yet?
2. What time do you *rise* daily?
3. Did Mr. Brown *raise* the salaries of his men?
4. Last week we *rose* every day at seven o'clock.
5. What are you *raising* on your farm?
6. Where were your children *reared*?
7. A *rise* in salary was given me last week.
8. Please *raise* the window; it is warm here.
9. He *raised* the question which caused the argument.
10. The sun *has risen*.
11. *Rise*, please, when your guests enter the room.
12. A gentleman always *rises* when a lady enters the room.
13. What time *does* the sun *rise* now?
14. It *rises* at five or a little later.
15. Yesterday it *rose* a little earlier.
16. Bread *rises* through the use of yeast.

# Pitfalls in English

## KEY TO EXERCISE 7, PAGE 82

1. The criminal *who* alienists say is normal should be punished.
2. The man *whom* the alienists judged as normal should be punished.
3. The man *whom* alienists consider to be normal should be punished.
4. The boy *whom* I thought artistic failed in his drawing examination.
5. They invited the members *who* the records showed were in good standing.
6. They invited the members *who* were thought to be in good standing.
7. They invited the members *whom* the officers had not invited.
8. To *whom* did you speak?
9. *Who* shall I say called?
10. *Whom* shall I call?
11. *Whom* did you sit behind at the concert?
12. From *whom* did you receive the gift?
13. The woman, *whom* I knew to be your sister, rang the bell.
14. The woman, *who* I knew was your sister, rang the bell.
15. The woman *whom* I knew was your sister.  
(No. 15 might be considered to mean:  
The (one) woman (at the meeting) *whom*  
I knew was your sister.)

## How to Avoid Them

16. The boys *who* wished to obtain positions for the summer did not go to camp.
17. The man *whom* I thought capable obtained the position.
18. The woman *whom* I took to be your sister was really you.
19. *Who* is there?
20. *Whom* did you ask for the privilege?

### KEY TO EXERCISE 8, PAGE 85

1. What was the *effect* of the medicine?
2. He tried to *affect* peace in the organization.
3. His *effects* were moved into the street.
4. The law will go into *effect* the first of the year.
5. The *effect* was immediate.
6. In *effecting* a reconciliation between the brother and the sister, he lost the friendship of both.

Do not consult the next seven sentences until you have again tried to supply *affect* and *effect* in the second group under *affect* and *effect* on page 86.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 9, PAGE 86

7. What *effect* does that type of person have upon you?
8. What *effect* does the medicine have?
9. How did the medicine *affect* you?

## Pitfalls in English

10. That man *affects* me unpleasantly.
11. That man *effects* harmony in whatever organization he enters.
12. The girl has an *affected* manner.
13. The music deeply *affected* me.
14. Dr. Ross's sermons *affected* me.

You have probably missed many in both groups. The device is one of the most useful in the book. Grasp it today. Never make a mistake in these words again. If you can use these two words correctly, you will be of greater value to your employer. If you use them incorrectly and he uses them correctly, he feels that he must always look over your letters containing these words. If you understand them and he does not, he finds you of great assistance.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 10, PAGE 93

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

1. The officer's speech did not *affect* the boy.
2. How did the climate *affect* you?
3. The *effect* of the climate was disastrous.
4. The ordinance went into *effect* yesterday.
5. The punishment *effected* a sudden change in his behavior.
6. The punishment *affected* him.

## How to Avoid Them

- { 7. That does not *affect* the situation. (alter the situation)  
7. That does not *effect* the situation. (bring about the desired situation)

The second one under seven would be a rare use. It is put here for the sake of any one who may raise the point.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 11, PAGE 96

1. He said that it was *I* who did it.
2. If you had been *they*, you would have done the same thing.
3. It was not *she* who called.
4. If I were *he*, I should go.
5. The nurse thought the patient to be *me*.
6. The officer said that it was *she* who falsified.
7. Who's there? It's *we*.
8. Who's there? It's *I*.
9. She thought my sister to be *me*.
10. I thought it was to have been *I* who would present the prize.
11. May I speak to Miss Smith? This is *she*.
12. It was *they* who responded to the call for help.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 12, PAGE 105

1. I felt so *bad* that I could have wept.
2. He wrote so *badly* that we could not read the sheet.
3. They seemed so *kind* that we engaged them to take care of the children.

## Pitfalls in English

4. How *bad* she looked when she was dancing!  
(I thought she would faint.)
5. He spoke *harshly* to me.
6. Doesn't she look *bad*?
7. The man walked *rapidly*.
8. The stream flows *swiftly*.
9. The nurse acted *promptly* (in the emergency).

### KEY TO EXERCISE 13, PAGE 117

1. Did you draw the *principal* from the bank?
2. The *principal* of the school is a man of fine *principles*.
3. *Principles* are rules of conduct.
4. *Principal* plus the interest equals the amount in the bank.
5. The *principal* store of the town burned.
6. The *principal* character in the story is an old soldier.
7. Did you go through the *principal* streets when you were in Detroit?
8. The *principal* hotel is palatial.
9. Is your *principal* a man or a woman?
10. We have no *principal*. He died. No one has been found of high enough *principle* to take his place.

## How to Avoid Them

### KEY TO EXERCISE 14, PAGE 122

1. I should *except* this one in passing favorable criticism upon the lot. It is the only one that is not satisfactory. (exclude)
2. I should *accept* this one as a gift but it is too expensive. You really cannot afford to buy it for me. (receive)
3. All of the boys *except* John passed a physical test. (excluding)

### KEY TO EXERCISE 15, PAGE 146

- { 1. *Shall* you go swimming this morning?  
(Is it your intention?)
- { 1. *Will* you go swimming this morning?  
(Promise me. Answer: *I will.*)
2. *Shall* you travel all next year? (Is that your intention?)
3. *Will* you please teach me how to knit?  
(Exacting a promise. Answer: *I will or will not.*)
4. *Will* you help me to clean house? (Exacting a promise. Answer: *I will or will not.*)
5. *Shall* I do it this way? (Never say, "*Will I?*")
6. *Shall* he go on duty at once? (Answer of employer: *He shall.*)

## Pitfalls in English

7. *Will* Kate do your marketing for you?  
(Is that Kate's intention?)
8. *Shall* Kate do your marketing for you?  
(Answer: *She shall*. I request it.)
9. *Shall we* assist you? (Never say, *Will we?*)
10. *Shall* my son call for you? (Answer:  
Yes, if you please; *he shall*.)
11. *Shall* we go now? (Never say, *Will we?*)
12. We *shall* drown, I fear, because there is  
no one in sight to assist us. (*We will*  
would mean that we are determined to  
drown.)
13. He *shall* obey you; I *will* see to that.  
(*He shall* means that there is determina-  
tion on the part of the speaker. *I will*,  
from the speaker, means a promise to  
see that he obeys.)
14. They *shall* call tomorrow; I promise you  
that.  
(*I will* is a promise; therefore, *they shall* is  
a promise.)
15. *Shall* I telephone to you about it? (Never  
say, *Will I?*)
16. John and I (we) *will* assist you. (*We will*  
is a promise.)
17. May *will* soon leave the city. (*She will*  
is not a promise.)

## How to Avoid Them

18. Thou *shalt* not steal. (Commandments are in the nature of determination.)
19. You *shall* not go. (Determination.)
20. I *will* call on him tomorrow if you wish. (*I will* is a promise.)

Remember in a question to think the answer out first. After deciding which word the answer will contain (*shall* or *will*), use that word in the question.

Remember: *I will* and *We will* are promises. All the other uses of *will* and all the uses of *shall* are directly opposite in meaning.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 16, PAGE 171

1. Were you so rude as to give every one but *him* an invitation to the dance? (except him)
2. I asked all but *her*. (except her)
3. All but *her* were asked. (except her)
4. Every one but *me* took part in the entertainment. (except me)
5. Everyone except *me* took part in the entertainment. (but me)
6. I saw all but *them*. (except them)

### KEY TO EXERCISE 17, PAGE 187

1. Did you engage a *stationary* engineer?
2. I am a lover of exquisite *stationery*.

## Pitfalls in English

3. The *stationary* tubs are out of order.
4. Why did you build *stationary* windows in that hall?
5. Put a piece of *stationery* over the crack in that *stationary* window to keep the draught out.
6. Do you use colored *stationery*?
7. The *stationer* was having shelves put up for the display of his *stationery*.
8. It is not considered in good taste to use highly colored *stationery*. Neither should one use ruled *stationery*.

### KEY TO EXERCISE 18, PAGE 192

1. *Leave* the windows closed when you go out.
2. *Let* me see your new purse please.
3. *Leave* the kettle on the stove when you go out.
4. *Let* me know as soon as you arrive.
5. *Leave* the gate closed.
6. He took a year's *leave* of absence.
7. He said that he would just as *lieve* pay the bill now.
8. I shall soon *leave* for New York.
9. *Let* me go.
10. *Leave* me alone in this room. I wish to be quiet.

## EXPLANATION

The following index is arranged primarily with the idea of helping those who are unfamiliar with technical grammar. Since *Pitfalls in English* contains no technical terms, the index should contain none; but for assistance to those who do understand them, a few are included.

### ITALICS

The technical expressions are printed in italics. They need not concern those who are not familiar with them. Their equivalents are given in language which all can understand.

#### *Illustration*

1. *reflexive pronouns*, 106-110 (technical)

2. self-words, 106-110 (not technical)

Lines 1 and 2 refer to the same point.

### QUOTATION MARKS

Expressions in quotation marks are those which should be eliminated from your speech.

#### *Illustration*

“Ain’t” should never be used. It is in quotation marks. (Find AIN’T in the index.)

BADLY is incorrect only at times. It is not in quotation marks. (Find BADLY in the index.)

# Explanation

## DASHES

Short dashes between two words indicate that other words are found between them in the text.

### *Illustration*

neither — — — is, 174

This means that on page 174 there are other words between NEITHER and IS that may confuse you and cause you to write the wrong word, ARE, instead of IS.

The fact that a word or an expression appears in the index does not indicate that it is correct. It is there, whether it is correct or incorrect, because there is some information about its use or its elimination which it is advisable for you to know.

Read the index through many times. The items will intrigue your interest and you will be impelled to look up points in which you have unconsciously made mistakes.

. . . . .

When you have read the book from cover to cover, when you have learned the devices and applied them to your everyday speech, your desire to improve your English will have taken such hold upon you that you will further pursue the fascinating subject. Your English will become a source of joy to you and your auditors.

Confident and unabashed, you will mingle in any group of English speaking people, serene in the knowledge that your words are correctly placed and pronounced and that your language is correct. Good English promotes assurance, initiative, and success. Begin at once to acquire it.

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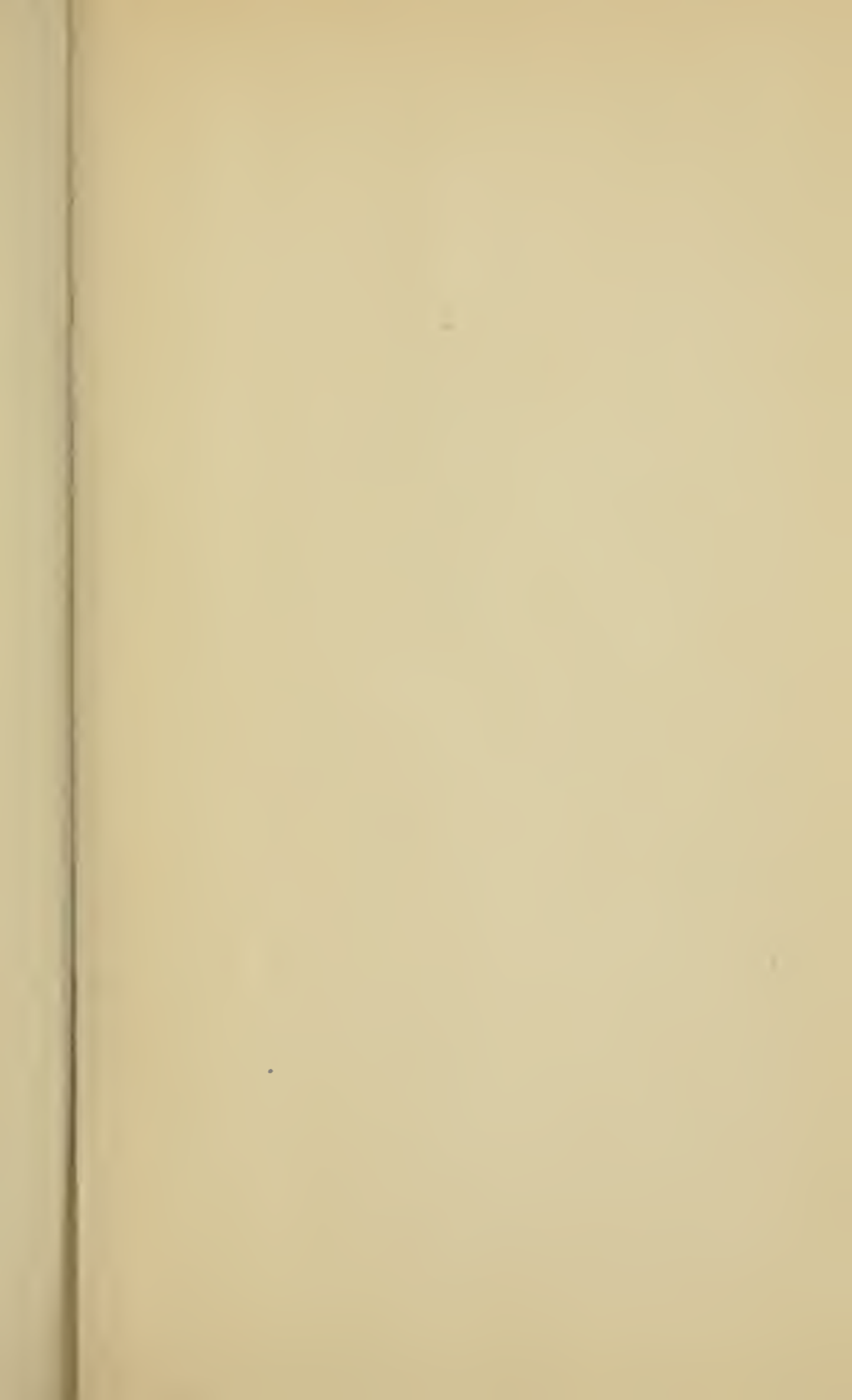
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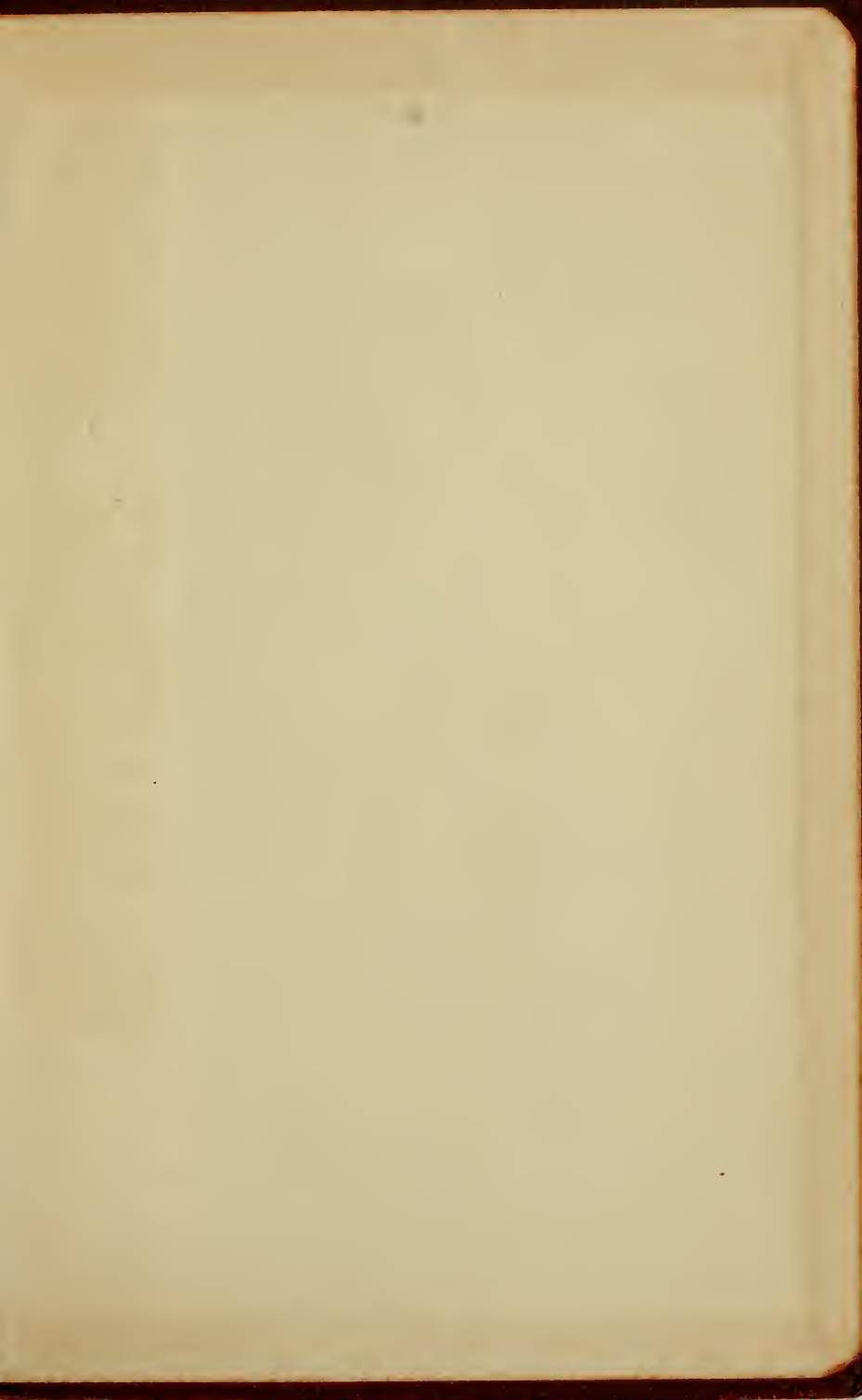




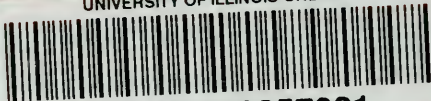








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